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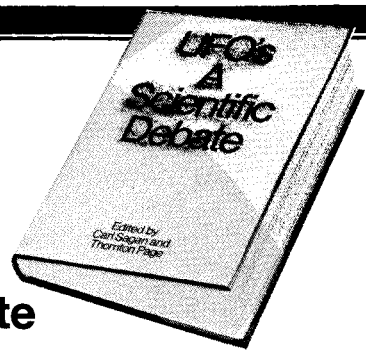

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The Despairing Optimist . . . . . .

RENÉ DUBOS

I am of two minds whenever I try to imagine what the earth would be like without men. On the one hand, I am awed by the extent of the damage we have done by our propensity to desecrate and spoil nature. Many of man's alterations of nature have been catastrophic; history is replete with ecological disasters caused by agricultural and industrial mismanagement. But on the other hand, I am cheered by the evidence that we can enrich and improve the earth by transforming it either for profit or for love; and this is the optimistic view of man's relation to nature that I wish to emphasize here.

My belief that man can improve on nature was expressed recently—in a symbolic manner so to speak—by the American painter Richard Bogart, discussing his philosophy of art: "I don't really feel that nature is that good in itself. It needs a painter's help. . . . The thing itself is terrific but I can help it. . . . I can exercise discipline where nature cannot. All it can do is to go through the cycle." What Richard Bogart said of painting can also apply to other types of human activities. Nature has endless potentialities, but most remain hidden until man brings them out by his reason, imagination and fantasy.

It is possible that we overstate our ability to change the surface of the earth either for better or for worse. In fact, nature does not need men to cause fantastic destruction, or to generate loveliness out of the most dreary environments. Earthquakes, volcanoes, drought, floods, hurricanes, hailstorms, locusts and countless parasites can have destructive powers that greatly exceed those of man. But on the other hand, flowering plants and showy birds eventually give charm and color even to the grayest fields of lava.

The destructiveness of nature and also its phenomenal creativeness were illustrated in a spectacular manner by the volcanic eruption of 1883, which destroyed two-thirds of Krakatau Island, situated in the Malay Archipelago between Sumatra and Java. Experts have estimated that the explosion had the violence of a million H-bombs! What is certain in any case is that its sound traveled 3,000 miles in all directions. The seismic wave it generated reached up to 135 feet above sea level, traveled over most of the world, and was still noticeable in the English Channel. Ash and gases rose 50 miles into the sky, blocking out sunlight for a 150-mile radius. Vast quantities of pumice hurtled through the air, defoliating trees and clogging harbors. The airborne dust particles gradually spread over the whole earth's atmosphere and persisted in high altitudes for some two years; unusual sky glows and spectacular sunsets caused by the fine dust could be seen in much of the world, including the United States, for several months after the explosion.

The seismic wave, traveling at more than 50 miles an hour, destroyed seaside villages in Java, Sumatra and neighboring islands; it carried ships with their dead crews miles inland. More than 37,000 persons are known to have been killed by the disaster,

✪ RENÉ DUBOS, microbiologist and experimental pathologist, is professor emeritus at Rockefeller University. His most recent book is *A God Within*.

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and all living things were destroyed on Krakatau itself as well as in all places in the direct path of the volcanic dust and the tidal wave.

When the eruption ended in 1883, Krakatau was covered by a thick layer of lava and completely lifeless. But progressively, wind and sea brought plants and animals to its shores and life once more took hold. By 1886, thirty-four species of plants were recognized. By 1920, there were some three hundred plant species and six hundred animal species including birds, bats, lizards, crocodiles, pythons and, of course, the ubiquitous rats. Today, less than ninety years after the great eruption, the plant communities on Krakatau are approaching the composition of the climax forests that prevail through the Malay Archipelago. To use Richard Bogart's expression, nature is once more going through its automatic cycles.

An experience I had last summer while visiting the Aegean Islands suddenly made me realize how much man's presence can diversify and enrich the creativeness of nature. Our ship had stopped at Thíra (Santorin) late at night, and my first view of the island was in the early morning, as I stepped out of my cabin. There, in front of me, was the incredibly perpendicular cliff, 1,000 feet high and plunging abruptly into water 1,200 feet deep. On the very upper edge of the cliff, gleaming white houses and colorful church domes were silhouetted against the luminous sky.

I knew that the cliff was the outcome of a tremendous volcanic eruption, which had split the island 3,500 years ago and had buried its remnants under a thick layer of pumice, in places 200 feet deep. Professor Spyridos Marinatos has estimated that the explosion was some four times more violent than that of Krakatau, so violent indeed that the heavy volcanic fallout and especially the tidal wave reached Crete 70 miles south and in a few minutes' time destroyed the Minoan civilization. I knew that Thíra had been devastated by other eruptions during historical times, even as late as July 9, 1956, when 2,400 houses—half of the town—were damaged and 53 persons killed. I knew that there was no source of water on the island except for the rainwater stored in large cisterns. Yet today the white houses and the colorful churches are glowing in the sun on the upper edge of the cliff; and some of the best wine and tomatoes of Greece are being produced from fields of volcanic pumice that are so poor that only a few trees and shrubs would naturally take root.

The volcanic eruption of 1500 B.C. with the accompanying earthquake had completely buried Thíra's urban civilization, which archaeologists only now are digging from under the thick layers of pumice. Nature, left undisturbed, eventually would have brought back the usual Aegean flora and fauna on the island. But men have returned and in the course of time they have created on it several consecutive civilizations. These in turn have had their ordeals, but nevertheless, they have continued to generate from the tormented Aegean rock a wealth of riches that could not possibly have emerged without man's imagination, order and perseverance.

The vastly different types of transformations undergone by the landscape following the volcanic cataclysms in Krakatau and in Thíra bring out in sharp relief the contrast between the automatic processes of nature and the changes guided by man.

When left undisturbed, all environments tend toward an equilibrium state. This mature or climax state—as it is called by ecologists—is spontaneously brought about by natural forces and evolutionary adaptation. The feedbacks that universally operate in nature always result in coherent equilibrated systems. Paul Valéry's remark, "There are no problems in nature, there are only solutions," expresses the sophisticated biological truth that so-called natural environments are adaptive solutions to a given set of circumstances. But the equilibrium states achieved by nature are not necessarily the best or the most interesting states. After the 1883 explosion, Krakatau would have evolved into a different ecological equilibrium if winds and tides had

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brought plants and animals different from those that actually landed—and especially if man had decided to colonize the island. Without man, Thíra would also have acquired a varied flora and fauna; but it would not have produced the small, tasty tomatoes and the heady wine for which it is now famous—let alone the spectacular skyline of gleaming houses and church domes on the edge of the cliff.

The claim that human intervention has made modern Thíra a place more interesting than it would have become if nature had operated without man is admittedly the expression of an anthropomorphic attitude. In fact, it implies that man occupies a special place in the biosphere—that he is *in* it but not *of* it—and consequently has the right to alter it as an object according to his own criteria and for his own ends. In my judgment it is a delusion to believe that we can avoid taking an anthropomorphic attitude toward nature. When ecologists criticize certain environmental practices because they will transform the earth into a place fit only for rats, roaches and ragweed, they clearly express human feelings and concerns in their ecological judgments, and not the preferences of rats, roaches and ragweeds. In evaluating what nature would be without men, we cannot avoid judgments of values—human values.

On his first trip from India to Europe, R. Tagore marveled at "that continent flowing with richness under the age-long attention of her chivalrous lover, western humanity." For him the richness and beauty of the European countryside was a loving creation of the peasantry, the result of an active wooing of the earth. While traveling in Greece last summer, I too deeply experienced once more that the intimate and long association between landscape and man generates new values, perhaps best expressed by the Moslem word *báraka*, which, according to Robert Graves, is the sense of blessedness that attaches itself to places and objects after years of loving use.

On a late afternoon of mid-July, I visited the ancient Byzantine monastery of Moni Kaisarianis, a few miles southeast of Athens. The monastery is nestled on the slopes of Mount Hymettus at 1,100 feet elevation; from it a trail meanders through an almost treeless landscape among thyme, lavender, sage, mint and other aromatic plants. The marblelike rock formations of Hymettus are denuded, but the luminous sky gives them an architectural quality that is particularly bewitching under the violet light at sunset.

Within a short distance of the monastery, the trail reaches an outcrop of rocks that affords a sudden view of the Acropolis, Mt. Lycabettus, and the whole city of Athens. As is so often the case in Greece, the buildings—whether dedicated to pagan deities, the Christian God, or urban life—derive from their placement in nature a dramatic quality that is independent of their architectural merit. And nature itself has been humanized by several thousand years of use. The grounds associated with the monastery have the traditional almond and olive trees of the Greek landscape, but these trees originated long ago in south central or southeastern Asia. The road that leads from Athens to the Kaisarianis monastery is shaded with eucalyptus trees, but these were introduced from Australia. Along the trail beyond the monastery the Hymettus is stark and luminous, but its rocks became clearly visible only after deforestation had led to erosion during historical times.

The writers of the classical, Hellenistic and Roman periods were aware of the transformations in the Greek landscape that had been brought about by deforestation. In *Critias,* Plato compared the land of Attica to the bones of a wasted body ". . . the richer and softer parts of the soil having fallen away, and the mere skeleton being left." In preclassical times, according to Plato, the roofs of dwellings were made of timber "cut from trees . . . which were of a size sufficient to cover the largest house." Because of deforestation, however, "the mountains only afford sustenance to bees." The famous honey of Hymettus is thus linked to deforestation,

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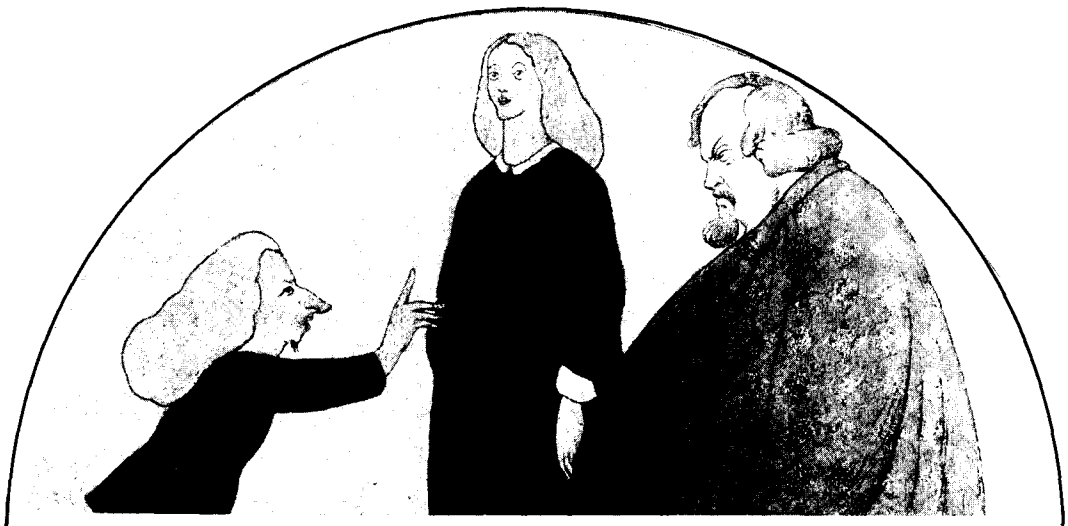

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which favored the multiplication of the bees and the growth of sun-loving aromatic plants.

Whereas the land used to be enriched by the rainfall when the mountain slopes were wooded, now, still according to Plato, erosion allows the water to "flow off the bare earth into the sea. . . ." The sacred groves and other sanctuaries are located in places where springs and streams once existed; but most springs and streams progressively dried up in the course of time as a consequence of deforestation.

The Ilissus River, which has its source on Mount Hymettus and runs through Athens, was still a lively stream in Plato's time. On a hot day of midsummer, Socrates and Phaedrus walked toward a tall plane tree on the banks of the Ilissus, a short distance from the Agora. As reported in the famous dialogue, they discussed rhetoric, philosophy, creativeness and love while cooling their feet in the water of the stream, which they found "delightfully clear and bright." Today, the Ilissus is dry much of the year, and serves as a sewer covered by a noisy roadway. There could not be a more painful symbol of the damage done to the human quality of life by the mismanagement of urbanization and technology.

The deforestation of the Greek mainland and islands is now far advanced, but the trend is not irreversible. In fact, trees and wild flowers reappear spontaneously on the denuded slopes wherever a serious effort is made to stop lumbering and prevent grazing. This has been achieved on a fairly large scale near Serrai in northern Greece. In Attica, the protection of limited areas by fencing has been sufficient to allow the spontaneous and rapid development of wild flowers and native trees.

With proper ecologic management, the Greek mainland and islands could once more be wooded as they were before the classical era, and reforestation would certainly result in improvements in climate and agriculture. As Henry Miller says in *The Colossus of Maroussi,* "The tree brings water, fodder, cattle, produce . . . shade, leisure, song. . . . Greece does not need archeologists—she needs horticulturists." But reforestation would make the landscape very different from the classical image we now have of it. For the Greek poet Kostes Palamas (1859-1943) in his poem "The Satyr or the Naked Song," the stark eroded structures of the present landscape triumphantly symbolize the "divine nudity" in Greece. And Henry Miller also, a few pages before and after the passage quoted above advocating reforestation, marveled at the rocks that "have been lying for centuries exposed to this divine illumination . . . nestling amid dancing colored shrubs in a blood-stained soil. . . . The very rocks . . . are symbols of life eternal." Beyond the Moni Kaisarianis monastery an area on the slopes of Mount Hymettus has been reforested with pines. This patch of forest appears as an inkblot on the luminous landscape, especially at sunset when a subtle violet atmosphere suffuses the bare rocks throughout the mountain range. The "divine nudity" and the "divine illumination" seem to lose their magic in the shade of the pine trees.

The Greek mountains probably were frightening and difficult to penetrate when they were completely wooded. After deforestation and erosion, in contrast, they acquired some of the qualities of a park; the traveler could move on their opened surfaces, his vision floating into a distance of golden light. I have wondered whether the dark and tormented divinities of the preclassical period did not become more playful and reasonably human precisely after they emerged from the forests into the open landscape. Would logic have flourished so well if Greece had remained covered with an opaque mantle of trees?

In Nordic countries, also, the attractiveness of the natural environment can be greatly improved by human intervention. During historical times, a large percentage of the coniferous forest in southern and central Sweden was cleared and converted into fields and pastures. The traveler driving or flying from the north toward Stockholm experiences a sense of relief when the monotonous mantle of trees begins to be broken by cultivated areas and smiling meadows. Increasingly, however, the small

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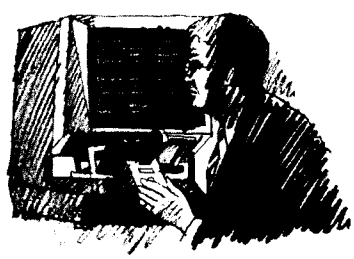

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farms of Sweden are becoming uneconomical and are abandoned. The openings in the forest, which used to support oats, rye, or other cultivated crops, as well as grazing cattle, are being taken over by spruce and pine planted in dull, straight lines. Even worse, the land that is left fallow is quickly invaded by juniper, briar and other unattractive brush.

Thus one of the problems of conservation in Sweden is to find ways to preserve the open landscape. Several experimental programs are being tested—subsidies to farmers for the continuation of grazing by cattle and sheep, or mechanical mowing for keeping the brush down. In either case, public funds are being spent to preserve the open countryside, *which is a man-made landscape.* Instead of being valued for its agricultural productiveness, farmland is considered an aesthetic asset—for a visual quality that used to be hidden under the natural mantle of trees and had to be revealed by human intervention.

There is nothing final about a given environment. Sweden and Vermont can be completely wooded, or some of their valleys and slopes can be converted into farmlands. The white rocks of Greece and the gray boulders of the Hudson River Valley can be covered with soil and trees, or they can be exposed and reveal the geologic architecture of the landscape, as on Mount Hymettus or in Central Park.

Men have always recognized or imagined orderly patterns in the bewildering opulence of nature. In fact, they have always humanized the earth to fit the patterns they perceive. Early in the Middle Ages, the Benedictine monks believed that, by transforming the chaotic and disordered wilderness, they were working as partners of God and completing His creation. I have used other words to express the same faith. We can manipulate the raw stuff of external nature to shape it into environments that are ecologically sound, economically profitable, aesthetically rewarding and favorable to man's nature. We can insert our dreams into ecological determinism and thus enrich the earth and diversify its manifestations by bringing out its hidden potentialities.

The column By Jerzy Kozinski *will appear in the Spring issue.*

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Portrait . . . . . .

Jacques Barzun

RICHARD FRANKO GOLDMAN

Créteil must have been a lively place in 1906 and 1907. It was in this town near Paris that Henri Barzun and a group of advanced young poets and painters purchased a house which, with a whimsical allusion to *L'Abbaye de Thélème,* they named *L'Abbaye de Créteil.* There, for two years, they conducted an experiment in communal living and working, and there the movements known as Orphism and Simultanism were born. The members of the group included Georges Duhamel, Albert Gleizes, Charles Vildrac and others well or less known, all full of enthusiasm and new ideas. Among the many frequent visitors to the Abbaye was Edgard Varèse, then in his early twenties. Louise Varèse, in her memoirs of her husband *(Varèse: A Looking-Glass Diary*), notes that among other activities the writers of the group printed their works on their own printing press. She adds:

> Henri Barzun, creator of what he has named "Orphic Poetry" and one of the charter members of L'Abbaye, has described it as "neither a Cloister nor a Tower of Gloom; our Abbaye was a youthful and enthusiastic Fraternity of French 'Brook Farmers,' 'Lakists,' and 'Pre-Raphaelites' all in one, whose aim was to adjust their lives to this Machine Age, whose ambition was to give the new Century a Literature and Culture commensurate with its momentous destinies."

✪ RICHARD FRANKO GOLDMAN is president of the Peabody Institute of the City of Baltimore. He is an author and translator who has contributed frequently to the "Art and Letters" department in the SCHOLAR.

It was into this milieu that Jacques Barzun was born to Henri and his wife Anna Rosa on November 30, 1907. The members of the Abbaye abandoned Créteil the following year, the Barzuns returning to Paris; but the associations continued, and the circle grew to include many of the most gifted and original young artists then active. In one of his rare autobiographical passages (in *The Energies of Art*) Jacques Barzun writes:

> To be born near the beginning of the decade before the first world war and at the center of the then most advanced artistic activity in Paris is an accident bound to have irreversible consequences on the mind. The first pictures seen: Cubist; the first music heard: Stravinsky's *Sacre;* the first poetry and drama: Futurist, Simultanist, "experimental," like the first new building visited . . . all this, thanks to childhood's uncritical acceptance of the given as normal, could not help forming the most natural introduction to art as it is made. Anything but strange, the sights and sounds and ideas that would later make the bourgeois howl were seen as the usual domestic occupations of family and friends; it was Apollinaire interspersing his critical arguments for the grownups with stories for the child; it was Marie Laurencin amid her pictures telling the boy to sit still while she sketched him; it was going to the studio of Duchamp and Villon in Puteaux, of Gleizes and Metzinger in Courbevoie, and while playing there seeing *The Harbor, The Nude Descending the Staircase,* the wonderful dynamic *Horse* in red clay and then in bronze, and other casts and canvases by the dozen.
>
> At home the scene was scarcely different. Every Saturday and sometimes oftener, the stage was full: Marinetti acting and shouting, Archi-

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penko making Léger roar with laughter, Delaunay and Ozenfant debating, Paul Fort declaiming his ballads, Varèse or Florent Schmitt surrounded at the piano. . . . On view at close range were also: Ezra Pound, Cocteau, Severini, Bérard, Kandinsky, Copeau, Bosschère, Polti, Milosz, Poiret, Brancusi, La Fresnaye, and many others fleeting or unremembered. Unquestionably, art and the discussion of art were the sole concern of all who counted in that particular universe.

Recalling a meeting in 1927 or 1928 between Varèse and Henri Barzun, Mrs. Varèse writes:

It was an interesting afternoon for me listening to Varèse and Barzun reminiscing and to Barzun describing the adventure of the Abbaye de Créteil and the creation in 1913 of his Orphic Art and Choral Simultaneity, epitomized in one of his books as: *The Voices, Rhythms, Chants of the World in Chorus.* Apollinaire once wrote: "Barzun was so right when he launched his manifesto on Poetic Simultaneity, of which he was the father." Barzun entertained high hopes for the future of this medium, which was rapidly spreading. All his life, writing, teaching, lecturing, he would continue to promote and develop it with an enthusiasm that kept him young into old age and with a conviction of its efficacy that made Henri Peyre in 1961 call him "a mystic and a man of unshakable faith."

If I have devoted a certain amount of space to Henri Barzun and his circle, it is because this background explains so much about Jacques, who was, and remains, essentially French, despite his years of activity in the United States, and his concern with specifically American problems and situations, reflected even in the titles of several of his books: *Teacher in America, Music in American Life, The American University.* Looking back, I realize that when I first met Jacques Barzun in 1927, he being then a senior at Columbia College and I a freshman, he must still have been a French citizen. Henri Barzun and his family had come to the United States in 1920, but Jacques did not become an American citizen until 1933, one year after he had received his Ph.D at Columbia. There is much of the temper of Montaigne and the classical French tradition of belles-lettres in Jacques, who in many ways is in the direct line of the thinkers and writers known as *politique et moraliste.*

At Columbia, even as an undergraduate, Jacques was a commanding force and presence. To borrow, with singular appositeness, from Izaak Walton's *Life of Dr. John Donne:*

He was of Stature moderately tall, of a strait and equally-proportioned body, to which all his words and actions gave an unexpressible addition of Comeliness.

The melancholy and pleasant humor, were in him so contempered, that each gave advantage to the other, and made his Company one of the delights of Mankind.

His *fancy* was unimitably high, equalled only by his great wit; both being made useful by a commanding judgment. . . .

He was not only the undisputed intellectual leader of the campus, but *arbiter elegantiarum* as well. Jacques presiding at a meeting of the Philolexian Society was unforgettable; at nineteen he had the poise, urbanity, wit and charm that characterize him today. He had also read and remembered at least six times as much as anyone else, or at least the equivalent of what any six of his fellow students had read. At nineteen he was already a polymath, but, let it be noted, a polymath with a good disposition, who helped and stimulated his colleagues, and was never overbearing.

Columbia in those years had its share of brilliant young men and women: Lionel Trilling, Meyer Schapiro, Francis Steegmuller, Dwight and Dorothy Miner, Henry Ladd, the Italian writer Mario Soldati—to name just a few. There was an exciting intellectual activity and an atmosphere of great confidence not only in the future of art, but in the future of many among us as artists.

After graduation from Columbia, Barzun entered the history department as an instructor, finding in this discipline the most satisfactory meeting ground for his

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many interests. He writes, again in *The Energies of Art:*

> Perhaps because art and its discussion were the staple of my young thoughts, the growth of my mind reversed the usual order of events by which, after an interest in the worldly and the palpable, art is finally "discovered" in early manhood. Beginning with art, and not abandoning it, I was only later drawn to history; and what temperament thus suggested, training confirmed. I found it natural to study history through culture and vice versa.

Barzun makes the point throughout his writings that "History comes before art in time and in thought," that the cultural historian is concerned with people other than artists (people, that is, for whom art presumably is created), and that the recognition of art as the highest product of civilization must not blind one to the fact that awareness of the total life of mankind is the necessary prior condition for the study or even the appreciation of art. Barzun's conception of cultural history was not viewed at first with any enthusiasm by his colleagues in the department. At that time the idea was a new one, and Barzun had to work hard, in what were actually pioneering efforts, for the establishment in theory and practice of cultural history as an academic discipline. Eventually, Barzun found a strong supporter in the highly respected Carlton J. H. Hayes, and the department gradually moved in the direction Barzun had indicated. Today the study of cultural history is taken for granted, as if it had always been the proper pursuit of historians. But it is largely because of Barzun's work that this is so.

In 1936, Jacques married Mariana Lowell, an excellent amateur violinist. One consequence was the great enlargement of his knowledge of chamber music and the technique of playing strings. In 1940 he made his first appearance in THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR with an essay entitled "To the Rescue of Romanticism." It had been written in 1934 but had found no editor willing to publish it, a measure of the public state of mind regarding a subject which engaged Barzun's attention for years to come. His first books had already appeared: *The French Race* in 1932, *Race: A Study in Superstition* in 1937, *Of Human Freedom* in 1939. Since 1940 Barzun has written dozens of pieces for THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, ranging from extended essays on art, culture, aesthetics, education or history (or, more usually, all of these combined) to delightful observations on detective fiction or other lighter topics that have engaged his interest. It should therefore hardly be necessary to describe or attempt to summarize Barzun's *oeuvre* for readers of these pages. Most readers, I am sure, are familiar with many of Barzun's books, and are aware of his views and positions on the issues that have concerned him for more than forty years as teacher and writer. It should be recorded, however, that Jacques Barzun is a cultural historian of great and original accomplishment; that he is a scholar of immense range and depth; that he is a brilliant teacher, a linguist, translator and connoisseur of music; and that he is also a practical and practiced man of affairs.

Jacques Barzun seems to be interested in *everything,* and his interest is never perfunctory. The extent of his reading and of his learning reflect an energy of mind that seems to me almost unbelievable. It is difficult to cite an author he has not read, a composer with whose works he is not familiar, a field of the intellect's activity, including science, that he has not explored. This energy is reflected, too, in the volume as well as in the scope of his work. Aside from his many major books, there are innumerable essays (not all collected as yet), prefaces, introductions, lectures, translations and editorial miscellany, some of considerable magnitude, and obviously representing a very great expenditure of time. Appendix D of *The American University* lists 144 articles or lectures on the subject of education alone; and I have sometimes wondered if I could ever pick up a book that did *not* have an introduction by Jacques Barzun.

This productivity would be astonishing enough if it were the work of a writer and thinker with no other commitments in the

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world. But Barzun is not a secluded philosopher; in addition to his teaching, he has been administrator, consultant, editor of a book club, active member of countless societies, professional organizations and boards of directors, and he is now president of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. One wonders at the organization of energy that permits this extraordinary activity.

With all this, however, Jacques Barzun never seems "too busy." He is never too busy to attend to his vast correspondence or to keep up with friends (even writing most of his personal letters in his very distinguished longhand); to write an introduction or a preface for the book of a colleague or anyone in whom he is for any reason interested; to show genuine interest in his students or in any young person of promise; to work disinterestedly on behalf of artists and writers in whose work he has faith. He is a man of truly great kindness, going out of his way to advise, encourage and support a variety of people, and doing favors endlessly. He does not suffer fools gladly, but he is amazingly restrained with them. What is both striking and impressive is the equanimity he displays in circumstances that would have most of us screaming.

Jacques gives the impression of possessing that rarest of qualities, serenity. One senses in him a profound self-containment and what he himself has described as the "impersonal calm" of intellect. His presence reassures as it radiates this strength. He does not enter a room like a whirlwind; the excitement comes when he begins to talk. For Jacques Barzun is a marvelous talker, in private as well as in public; in company he talks like a character from a novel by Peacock or Meredith. His tone, in speaking as in writing, is that of the sage, never that of the prophet. Barzun is not melancholic: it is the bright light of the soul, not its dark night, that concerns him. There is no mysticism in his make-up (or at least I have not discerned any in forty-five years). All is reason, which he seems confident will prevail. He is neither rebellious against, nor acquiescent in, the folly he knows surrounds him. But, self-possessed and evidently confident, he seems to know, not that he can conquer folly, but that he can cope with it.

These qualities of person and of presence are evident throughout Barzun's writing from his first book to his latest. The style is rich and complex, but it is always lucid and precise, lucidity and precision being important among Barzun's own rigid prescriptions for the adequate communication of any thought. The wealth of allusion, direct and indirect, in his writing often presents a challenge to the reader, who cannot reliably be expected to match the author in the game of ready reference. I write "game" advisedly, for there is usually something playful in the way that Barzun spices the meat of his discourse. Even in the most intense arguments there is a wit that shines through, and a deftness of touch that on occasion makes for high comedy. Barzun is never ponderous in the style of scholarly journals; his tone never appears "earnest"; it is light, fast-moving, and as serious as Mozart, who also appreciated comedy, and whose music is infinitely more serious than that, for example, of the earnest Bruckner.

The analogy with Mozartean style leads to a consideration of Barzun's lifelong preoccupation with Berlioz, who also represents clarity, intelligence, originality and seriousness, and who was thinker and doer as well as artist. Barzun's *Berlioz and the Romantic Century* is one of the greatest musical biographies ever written, but it is far more than that: it is a work of art that deals seriously with ideas of artistic truth and reality. It is also a book about an author who is thinker and artist like his hero, and who moves with him freely through two centuries of art and thought. It is a book about the contemporary problems of timeless art, as well as the timeless nature of contemporary problems; it is history and aesthetic, argument and narration. We meet in it not only a "real" Berlioz, but a real Barzun of whom the former is a part, and the complete reader must feel himself privileged to meet both.

The themes that recur in Barzun's work

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are many, but there are four that are dominant: the necessity of knowing history in order to understand the present; the establishment of an intelligent view and appreciation of Romanticism and "the Romantic century"; the critical assessment of the "crisis" in modern culture, including the situation of education; and perhaps underlying all of these, restoration of respect for intellect and its works.

These themes are expounded and developed in the main body of Barzun's work, the remarkable books beginning with *Darwin, Marx and Wagner* (1941) through *Science: The Glorious Entertainment* (1964), and including *Romanticism and the Modern Ego* (1943, reissued, with additions, in 1961 as *Classic, Romantic and Modern), Berlioz and the Romantic Century* (1950), *The Energies of Art* (1956), and *The House of Intellect* (1959). Specifically addressed to problems of education are *Teacher in America* (1945) and *The American University* (1968). Not entirely peripherally, we have the delightful anthology *The Pleasures of Music* (1951), *Music in American Life* (1956) and a large list of translations.

Barzun divides his published work into three categories: history, criticism and translations. These are all clearly related, if not in fact inseparable. The work of the critic and the cultural historian overlap, and the two functions do not represent a shift in point of view. The choice of works translated or edited is also a direct expression of this relatedness. In *The Energies of Art,* Barzun points out "the interest which Criticism usually takes in the sequences of history. . . ." Conversely, in *Science: The Glorious Entertainment*, which the author declares is "primarily descriptive," there are notable passages dealing with the nature of criticism.

A "portrait" of a writer is often self-sketched, not by what he says about himself, but by what he states as a moral or intellectual position. For example, in *Science: The Glorious Entertainment:*

> Criticism as I understand it differs entirely from attack or complaint. Its difference from complaint is especially important here, for I am persuaded that complaints against the machinations of culture today have become as poisonous as the things complained of. This is not surprising. Resentment and indignation are feelings dangerous to the possessor and to be sparingly used. They give comfort too cheaply; they rot judgment, and by encouraging passivity they come to require that evil continue for the sake of the grievance to be enjoyed.

I have never seen Jacques Barzun angry, resentful, spiteful or depressed, and only rarely have I known him indignant. He can be mercilessly devastating in his analysis of folly, stupidity, blindness or self-deception, but he does not write heatedly or in tones of impatience or intolerance. He is rarely sarcastic. One recognizes that disruptive emotions are kept out of his work, and are not so much controlled by intelligence as curbed by intellect.

Intellect is a word in disuse; so is grace. Instead of them we have "intellectual" (noun) and "graceful." Barzun has taken some pains with "intellect" and "intellectual," two words that in present-day usage often seem to have little or no relation to each other. Barzun makes fine distinctions of the same sort between science and "scientism," or between specialization and "specialism." One is again reminded of the exactness of the great French *moralistes* from La Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère to Vauvenargues and Chamfort, and one can hear the echo in Barzun's work of La Rochefoucauld's careful distinctions among *grand esprit, bel esprit, bon esprit, esprit adroit, esprit utile, esprit fin, esprit brillant, "qui paraissent très semblables sur le papier, et qui expriment néanmoins de très différentes sortes d'esprit."*

Barzun defines intellect in these terms:

> Intellect is the capitalized and communal form of live intelligence; it is intelligence stored up and made into habits of discipline, signs and symbols of meaning, chains of reasoning and spurs to emotion—a shorthand and a wireless by which the mind can skip connectives, recognize ability and communicate truth. Intellect

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is at once a body of common knowledge and the channels through which the right particle of it can be brought to bear quickly, without the effort of redemonstration, on the matter in hand.

There can be intelligence without intellect; there can even be "intellectuals," usually those spoiled by "specialism," who decidedly lack intellect. What Barzun insists on is that civilization depends on a tradition of learning, on the ability to recognize allusions and references to our common heritage (now so often and so easily rejected, if ever known) of art, literature, scientific thought and the various accomplishments of the human mind that lie behind our present being. He is, in short, pleading the value of liberal, historical and humanistic education on its highest potential level.

Barzun's defense of intellect sets him against most modern or fashionable positions. He is well aware of this, and he takes careful aim (never potshots) at cant, pedantry, half-digested ideas, "preposterism" (one of his rare and effective neologisms) and the dilution of art and thought for the unlettered. He cannot be popular with the new leaders of nonthink, nor should he be. But he does not worry about popularity or being loved, and can even take or leave being called an Olympian or a mandarin, both of which in a sense he is. In Barzun's view, "Intellect presupposes Literacy":

> . . . it is for lack of Intellect that we have such a hard time judging persons and ideas; it is absence of Intellect that makes us so frightened of criticism and so inept at conversation; it is disregard of Intellect that has brought our school system to its present ridiculous paralysis.

On the surface, many of Barzun's views may be read as defensive, patrician and rearguard. Certainly his values are not those which govern society in the 1970s. But his position is very clear: he does not plead for a "return" to anything; he is under no illusion about past golden ages; he simply and cogently reaffirms belief in values that to him seem necessary to civilized life at any time: grace, literacy, manners, thought itself.

"Conversation is the testing ground of manners." There is a phrase that could have come straight from La Rochefoucauld, a maxim or *pensée* or *réflection morale.* In this brief observation Barzun establishes a whole world of reference and makes his own relation to it clear. Manners are not merely ornamental, conversation is not simply exchange of words:

> . . . manners are minor morals which facilitate the relations of men, chiefly through words. When those verbal relations are deliberately staged, for no other purpose than pleasure, men find themselves engaged in an intellectual exercise that is one of the delights of life. Manners, therefore, are not solely a clue to the deeper moral assumptions of an age, they are also a strong or weak guardian of Intellect at its most exposed.

Conversation with Jacques Barzun is indeed one of the delights of life. For it, one needs all of one's resources, and one must stay honest. Jacques is an expert at puncturing pretension, and he never commits the misdemeanor of quoting himself. The fresh, free flow of ideas, comments, opinions, paradoxes, witticisms and questions brings cheer to the soul and encourages response. His intimate correspondence has the same style and character; it is conversation in blue ink. And it might be added that the volume of this correspondence is prodigious. Not being "too busy" is seen also to be a part of manners.

Jacques Barzun is the only author of my acquaintance who has damaged a leg as a direct result of writing. After an account of a difficult summer he writes:

> At the end, too, I did something stupid, which has got me partly crippled. I write on a writing board and I apparently kept it propped up too long—or with too heavy a weight of books—on one crossed knee. The result was some disorder of the circulation which found a weak spot in my broken ankle, and I've been hobbling ever since, with odd thrills and sensations up and down the leg.
>
> Forgive this clinical vision: it only shows that

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writing is a very dangerous trade.

Would Jacques agree with Rémy de Gourmont?

Writing is a trade, and I should like it to be listed in its alphabetical order, between shoemaking and carpentry [In French: *cordonnerie . . . écriture . . . menuiserie*] rather than as something separate from other spheres of man's activity. . . . To write is to exist, to set one's self apart. To have a style is to speak a special dialect, unique and inimitable, within the frame-work of the common language, so that this becomes at one and the same time the language of everybody and the language of one. . . . This does not obviate the fact that one must write for men as if one were writing for angels; for in that way one approaches, to the best of one's craft and one's character, the greatest possible beauty, however ephemeral and perishable it may be . . . (*La Culture des Idées,* 1899).

Jacques Barzun's most recent book (except for *A Catalogue of Crime*) appeared in 1971 as *Jacques Barzun on Writing, Editing and Publishing.* This is a collection of related short essays dealing with the "trade" of writing, dating from 1945 to 1969. In his foreword to this volume Morris Philipson, director of the Chicago University Press, writes:

Barzun's crucial terms of evaluation are moral, not aesthetic. What is execrable is what misleads, what traduces, what injects error, what cloaks the absence of thought or feeling, what pretends to be something other than it is, what is false. . . .

Where transparency of the medium is coupled with density of thought or richness of feeling, Barzun argues, the contrast yields eloquence, the greatest power inherent in the artful use of language.

In personal relations the analogue of eloquence is the power to charm. Charming another (unlike merely entertaining him) enriches that person through such fascinating communication as enhances his sense of vital experience. He is made wiser or warmer for it—"more alive". . . . We are offered precious little in our formal or informal education to help us cultivate the power to charm and, similarly, there are all too few counsels to help writers cultivate the power of effectiveness, let alone eloquence.

Eloquence in writing or speaking, charm in the society of men and women, are not among the qualities most conspicuously admired in our times. In a sense they are old-fashioned; we have not time to be charming or much ability or desire to be eloquent. But it is still possible to be both, as Barzun proves. And to the defense of his ideas he brings not only his learning, intelligence and wit, but his eloquence and charm as well. Again and again in his writing, Barzun demonstrates also that he can be both elegant and tough. In the epilogue to *Classic, Romantic and Modern* there is a brief passage that wonderfully illustrates Barzun's temper. After a powerful discussion of the dissolution or "self-extinction" of art today, he writes:

To say this is not to condemn the age, but to discern its fate. There are moments in history, as Burke late in life observed of the French Revolution, when the tide sets so universally in one direction that the spectacle is like the hand of Providence at work. A man—or even mind itself—would be time's fool to say anything but that the outcome bears the seal of necessity. And just as intellect should refrain from passing judgment, so should the moral sense and the intimate emotions. There is nothing to reprove and nothing to bewail.

With the Philistines in command and the barbarians within the gates, it takes courage and magnanimity to say that there is nothing to reprove and nothing to bewail. I cannot say that I agree that this is so, but tempers and temperaments differ, and Jacques does not yield to discouragement or despair. In an age of confusion and disintegration, all of his work is aimed at helping us to understand the prejudices and superstitions that seem to govern the world. Whether treating of contemporary "crisis," or illuminating the work of such diverse artists and thinkers of the past as Byron or Bagehot, Goethe or Gautier, Diderot or Darwin, Barzun's writing is directed to the recall of our sense of history

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and to helping us see "who we are in the stream of time and Western thought." That is the proper reading of history and one of the continuing functions of intellect.

To convey, in a short essay, the unity and variety of Jacques Barzun is not easy. And perhaps the best "portrait" of him was drawn some two hundred and sixty years ago by Alexander Pope in the *Essay on Criticism:*

But where's the man, who counsel can bestow,
Still pleased to teach, and yet not proud to know?
Unbiased, or by favour, or by spite;
Not dully prepossessed, nor blindly right;
Though learned, well-bred; and though well-bred, sincere;
Modestly bold, and humanly severe:
Who to a friend his faults can freely show,
And gladly praise the merit of a foe?
Blest with a taste exact, yet unconfined;
A knowledge both of books and human kind;
Generous converse; a soul exempt from pride;
And love to praise, with reason on his side?

Harlow Shapley

1885-1972

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"His name will forever be listed with the names of the great scientific philosophers, from Aristotle and Ptolemy through Copernicus, Galileo and Newton, to Hubble and Einstein."

—BART J. BOK

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The Attack on Literature

RENÉ WELLEK

IN RECENT YEARS we have heard much about the "death of literature," the "end of art," the "death of culture" and have become familiar with such terms as "antiart" and "postculture." We have been told by Jacques Ehrmann that "literature, a dumping ground of fine feelings, a museum of 'belles-lettres,' has had its day." Norman Mailer believes that "we have passed the point in civilization where we can ever look at anything as an art work."

I should like to examine the arguments for these views, to disentangle their motives and to set them in an historical perspective by tracing the term and the concept of "literature" through their history.

We can distinguish among several directions from which the attack on literature has come in recent decades.

One is politically motivated. It is the view that literature (and presumaly all art) is conservative or at least a conserving power, which serves only the interests of the ruling class. To quote some examples, Roland Barthes, in France, has said that "literature is constitutionally reactionary"; in Germany, Oswald Wiener has complained that "the alphabet was imposed by higher-ups"; and in this country, Louis Kampf, who was president of the Modern Language Association in 1971, has charged, in the Autumn, 1971, *New Literary History 3,* that "the very category of art has become one more instrument of making class distinctions." In "Notes Toward a Radical Culture" he asserts that the very concept of culture "is rooted in social elitism." It can be "little else but an instrument of class oppression." "Initiating the underprivileged to the cultural treasures of the West could be a form of oppression—a weapon in the hands of those who rule" as

✪ RENÉ WELLEK's most recent book is *Discriminations: Further Concepts of Criticism.*

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"high culture tends to reinforce the given alignments of power within the society" (*Change,* May-June, 1970). The logical deduction from Kampf's argument would be that people should be denied access to great literature and art in the name of their political advancement. Louis Kampf describes himself standing on the Piazza Navona in Rome, admiring the baroque fountains and architecture but thinking rather of "the crimes, the human suffering, which made both the scene and my being there possible." "My being there" alludes presumably to the grant he received from a foundation or university to travel to Rome—money that he considers tainted because it is amassed by economic exploitation. He hates "the economic system which has invested finely chiseled stone with a price. Our esthetics are rooted in surplus value," he concludes, appealing to Marxist terminology but not, of course, rejecting the grant. In a different mood he recommends the destruction of what he considers a conspicuous symbol of high culture. "The movement should have harassed Lincoln Center from the beginning. Not a performance should go by without disruption. The fountains should be dried with calcium chloride, the statuary pissed on, the walls smeared with shit." These incitements to vandalism are printed on fine paper in a volume entitled *The New Left.*

No doubt, many splendid works of architecture were built with slave labor, beginning with the Egyptian pyramids, and the money that paid for the fountains on the Piazza Navona came, presumably, from the papal treasury, which collected taxes in ways we might consider unjust and oppressive. But the generalized rage against all art and literature seems, to say the least, most unjust toward large trends of literature in many lands. Even the briefest reflection will recall the eminently subversive, or at least liberalizing, role of literature in many historical situations: the French revolution was prepared by the *philosophes;* the Russian Revolution drew sustenance from a long line of writers critical of the Tsarist regime; the idea of a unified Italy was kept alive for centuries by her poets. The rebirth, in the nineteenth century, of the Greeks and the Hungarians, the Czechs and the Poles, was triggered by poets and men of letters, and

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today few would refuse admiration for his heroic resistance against new oppression to Alexander Solzhenitsyn or deny the prominent role of writers in the "Prague Spring" of 1968.

Thus the political attack on literature simply amounts to an attack on conservative ideology, which necessarily has been expressed in print, just as revolutionary ideology has found expression in print, struggling, no doubt, with the obstacles of censorship and government monopoly of print long before the advent of modern totalitarianism, right or left. As long ago as 1816 William Hazlitt complained, on the occasion of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus,* that "imagination is an aristocratic faculty," that "it is right royal, putting the one above the infinite many, might before right," that "the language of poetry naturally falls in with the language of power" and that "the principle of poetry is a very antileveling principle." Still, even in his time, Blake and Shelley showed that this is not necessarily true and that, as common sense tells us, literature and poetry as such cannot be guilty; men and writers say what they want to say—conservative or revolutionary thoughts, good or evil thoughts. The political attack on literature is a foolish generalization.

Much more serious and interesting is the attack on literature that is basically motivated by a distrust of language. Since the dawn of history many have felt that language fails to express their deepest emotions and insights, that the mystery of the universe or even of a flower eludes expression in language. Mystics have said so, in many variations, about their experience of the transcendent. Shakespeare has Othello say on meeting Desdemona again after landing on Cyprus: "I cannot speak enough of this content; it stops me here; it is too much of joy." Cordelia in answering Lear's fatal question can say only, "Nothing. . . . I cannot heave my heart into my mouth." Goethe constantly complains of the inadequacy of language and the German language in particular. Philosophers, at least since Locke, have formulated their suspicion of words, and Bishop Berkeley has exhorted us "to draw the curtain of words to behold the fairest tree of knowledge." Fritz Mauthner's three-volume *Critique of Language* accumulates impressive evidence for this indictment; and the British

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analytical philosophers have made us more aware of the precariousness and shiftiness of our abstract and emotional vocabulary. The frightening inflation of the word in journalism and propaganda has brought home to a great many that the old certainties about terms such as "democracy," "justice" and "liberty" are gone forever. Linguists such as Benjamin Whorf have tried to show how closely grammatical and syntactical categories shape the view of the world of different people in different cultures; the Hopi Indians, he argued, see a very different order of the world from ours. Philosophers such as Ernst Cassirer, extending Kantian insights, have demonstrated that language builds the very structure of our knowledge. We all speak of the indescribable, the unspeakable, we say that words fail us, that words cannot express this horror or that beauty.

This old feeling has in the last century led to a definite rejection of normal language by poets struggling with elusive inner states of mind. Mallarmé was one of the first to despair of expressing the mystery of the universe, which he felt not only to be immensely dark but also hollow, empty and silent. Hugo von Hofmannsthal, in a fictitious letter of Lord Chandos to Bacon (1902), expressed his discontent with language, his (or rather his letter-writer's) justification for falling silent, because he wished only to "think with the heart." Today this motif has become insistent and almost commonplace. J. Hillis Miller tells us that "all literature is necessarily a sham. It captures in its subtle pages not the reality of darkness but its verbal image. . . . Words, the medium of fiction, are a fabrication of man's intellect. They are part of the human lie" *(Poets of Reality).* In France, Roland Barthes complains that "literature is a system of deceptive signification": it is "emphatically signifying, but never finally signified" *(Essais critiques).* The Saussurian terminology hides a simple thought: a word can never become a thing. Michel Foucault in *Les Mots et les Choses* has construed a whole history of the human mind in three stages of its attitude toward language. Before the advent of rationalism men assumed that words are things; they believed in the magic of words. In the Enlightenment people wanted to discover the order of things by words or, in

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Foucault's technical jargon, they wanted to find "a nomenclature which would be also a taxonomy." Our own period has concluded, as Foucault puts it, that "the thing being represented falls outside of the representation itself," and that man is thus unhappily trapped in a language game of which he knows nothing. There is no relation between language and reality. Language and literature have no cognitive value.

One result of this criticism of language has been the current cult of silence. Taken literally it lends itself to ridicule. In the nineteenth century one could laugh at Carlyle's gospel of silence in thirty volumes, and one might feel that there is nothing easier than to be silent. Still, George Steiner, Susan Sontag, Ihab Hassan and other advocates of silence continue writing. But silence, as Susan Sontag recognizes, has become a metaphor for "a perceptual and cultural clean slate," the end of art, the ultimate horror. Samuel Beckett in *Endgame* has been "looking for the voice of his silence." But Theodor Adorno's famous saying, "No poetry after Auschwitz," is not a practical solution. The artist's dissatisfaction with language can only be expressed by language. Pause may be a device to express the inexpressible but the pause cannot be prolonged indefinitely, cannot be simply silence as such. It needs a contrast, it needs a beginning and an end. Even John Cage in his notorious piece of music in which three musicians or rather performers appeared and did nothing, had to time it four minutes and thirty-three seconds; he could not have kept it up for even four hours. Actually he replaced music by an act of pantomime that aroused expectations he disappointed. He manipulated his audience and their time sense, put on a show, made a joke, but made no music of silence since there is no silent poetry or literature.

In France, Maurice Blanchot has prophesied the "disappearance of literature" and has envisaged "the death of the last writer." He recalls that there have been ages and countries without writers, and he dreams of ages without them in the future. He prophesies that "a great disgust against books will seize us." The age without words will announce itself by the "irruption of a new noise. . . . Nothing heavy, nothing noisy; at most a murmur

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which will not add anything to the great tumult of the cities which we think we suffer under today. Its only character will be: it never stops. It is speaking, it is as if the emptiness spoke, without mystery. The silence speaks." There will be no refuge for a minority in libraries and museums. They will be burned as Marinetti exhorted the Italians in 1909 to do, in his desire to rid them of their burdensome past. In Blanchot's vision, the dictator—from *dictare,* to say—will take the place of the writer, the artist and the thinker. A deep despair about the future of mankind and of civilization speaks loudly through him and many others. "The human voice conspires to desecrate everything on earth," says J. D. Salinger. Still, if we reflect upon this indictment of literature and language, we should recognize that it is man's actions, man's tools and inventions, his whole society that are condemned here. Admittedly, civilization would be impossible or even completely different if man had not developed speech and writing, which have speeded communication and prolonged human memory. But to deplore this, as our apocalyptic prophets of doom and silence do so eloquently, means deploring that man is man and not a dumb animal—a mood, a gesture of despair but hardly a possible way of life and behavior. Men will continue speaking, and even writing.

Less apocalyptically, literature and writing have been seen as a transitory form of human communication to be replaced by the media of the electronic age. We all know of Marshall McLuhan's prophecy of the end of the Gutenberg era, his hope that our visual literature will be replaced by the double medium, television, which he argues is both aural and tactile. I won't enter into the difficulties of his theories: they have been aired by critics who believe that television is just as visual as the film, despite his argument in *Understanding Media* that in television "the plastic contours appear by light *through,* and not light *on,* and the image so formed has the quality of sculpture or icon rather than picture." McLuhan willfully confuses visibility and legibility. He cannot prove that literacy has impoverished the spoken language. There is, however, little doubt that the new media have made inroads into the reading habits particularly of youngsters,

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but for the present, there are no indications of any extinction of literacy, reading or the production of books. Any examination of statistics shows that book production and book sales have risen by leaps and bounds in all countries. In 1966, 460,000 new books were published. Even the usual assumption that the proportion of nonfiction compared to fiction has altered radically is not borne out by statistics. In Germany, as a recent article by Dieter Zimmer showed, fiction accounted for 16.4 percent of all book production in 1913 and for 19.5 percent in 1969. Nor is it true that book production is mainly reprinting of older literature. Of the 36,000 books published in West Germany alone in 1971, 85 percent were new books. Similar studies made for the United States, England and France yield similar results. The enormous expansion of the reading public in Eastern Europe and in the so-called Third World is an undeniable fact which makes the end of the Gutenberg era an event of the very far distant future.

All these attacks on literature, the politically motivated attack, the despair about the language, the retreat from the word, the cult of silence, and McLuhan's doubts about the future of literacy, assume a concept of literature that includes all acts of writing, from the most trivial to the most sublime. They make no distinction of quality, no aesthetic judgment.

The aesthetic concept of literature, the very concept of literature as art, has been under attack most insistently in recent decades. The collapse of aesthetics is the presupposition of the success of these attacks. The largely German theory of empathy, which reduces aesthetic feeling to the physical action of inner mimicry; the aesthetics of Benedetto Croce in which "intuition" is identified with any act of perception of individual quality—even of *this* glass of water; John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934), which denies all distinction between aesthetic and other experiences in favor of a unified, heightened vitality; I. A. Richards's writings on literary criticism, which abolish all distinction between aesthetic and other emotions, are just a few examples of this trend. More recently the analytical philosophers have tried to demonstrate "the dreariness of aesthetics," the "nonsense" of

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all traditional terms of aesthetics: beauty, form, and so on. Some of these criticisms are directed against aestheticism, the art for art's sake movement at the end of the last century, which set up art in an ivory tower or, contradictorily, claimed to make all life "beautiful." Chiding aestheticism as it deserved, the reaction against it involved its presumed ancestors: the founders of aesthetics, Kant, Schiller, Schelling and Hegel, none of whom would have ever dreamt of denying the enormous social and civilizing role of art. They were even extravagantly confident of its power. The aesthetic education propounded by Schiller was a scheme for freeing man from the necessities of nature and the evils of specialization.

The revolt against aesthetics was also a revolt against classical art with its demands for beauty, order, form, harmony and clarity of meaning. But such a desire to make things new was not a denial of the ideal of art or literature; rather it was an attempt at a redefinition of art or an extension of its meaning to allow for the innovations of the twentieth century. A German volume of conference papers and debates called *Die nicht mehr schönen Künste,* "the no longer fine arts" wittily formulates what has happened in recent decades: the inclusion in art of the ugly, the formless, the disorderly, the outrageous and obscene that culminated in Dada's thumbing its nose at art and echoes today in such movements as pop art. Attempts have been made not only to widen the realm of art but to abolish the boundary between art and nonart. In music, noises of machines or the streets are used; in painting, collages of stuck-on newspapers, or "found objects"—soup cans, bicycle wheels, electric bulbs, any piece of junk—are exhibited. The newest fad is "earthworks," holes or trenches in the ground, tracks through a cornfield, square sheets of lead in the snow. A "sculptor," Christo, wrapped a million square feet of Australian coastline in plastic. In poetry, poems have been concocted by the Dadaists by drawing newspaper clippings from a bag at random; more recently poems have been produced by computer, and a shuffle novel (by Marc Saporta) has appeared, in which every page can be replaced by another in any order. In these new techniques the old criteria of both making

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and intentionality are denied: it is the extreme consequence of the rejection of the old conception of the poet as prophet, as *poeta-vates,* the laureate, the "unacknowledged legislator" with which the Western tradition has been familiar since Dante, Petrarch, Tasso, Milton and Shelley. The concept of inspiration is rejected: the new technological antiart divorces the poet from the poem, the artist from the object.

Yet another attack on literature leads to different consequences. It urges the same objection to defining literature by the quality of the art product. Northrop Frye's immensely influential and highly ingenious *Anatomy of Criticism* urges abolishing all critical judgment in favor of a concept of literature that makes it an organ of myth-making, a part of man's dream of self-definition. The result is that he can discuss any fairy tale, legend or detective story, as if it were on an equal footing with the greatest works of Dante, Shakespeare or Tolstoy. This breaking down of old barriers in favor of fictionality, myth-making, or "fabulation" must be distinguished from other attempts to disrupt the old concept. I am thinking of critics such as Leslie Fiedler and Richard Poirier, who want to extend the concept of literature to include what used to be called subliterature: pornography, science fiction and the popular song. Fiedler propagates a new, or possibly old, taste: in an essay, "The Children's Hour," the song full of "lovely commonplaces, long-honored phrases, sentimental clichés" is exalted; the tritest poems of Longfellow appear alongside poems of the Beatles, Bob Dylan and black antiverse, as Fiedler feels liberated, sincere for the first time. He can now repudiate Modernist poetry, "feel free at last to evoke in public the kind of poems which I have never ceased to love" but "which I've long felt obligated to recite in the catacombs, as it were." This assertion of a different taste, a return to the folksy, the sentimental, the direct expression of simple feelings, is the opposite of what is accomplished by computer poetry or by the graphic devices of so-called "concrete" poetry or even the automatic writings of surrealists. The dissolution of the concept of literature proceeds thus in two opposite directions: toward impersonal technology or toward subliterature.

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Still, both these extensions of the concept of literature are within the realm of art. One can argue (as Louis Mink has, ingeniously) that even the most impersonal "found objects" can be salvage for art if we assume that the fact of their being singled out gives them some allegorical or iconographic meaning. Even the hospital urinal submitted by Marcel Duchamp or the grocery boxes of Andy Warhol are, somehow, works of art. They do express some rudimentary feeling. But the latest developments amount to a complete denial of art. Harold Rosenberg, in his new, aptly named book *The De-definition of Art,* quotes an artist as saying, "I choose not to make objects. Instead, I have set out to create a quality of experience which locates itself in the world." The artist has become too big for art: he regards anything he makes or does as art. "No one can say with assurance what a work of art is—or, more important, what is not a work of art." We can't distinguish between a masterpiece and junk. Nothing is left of art but the fiction of the artist. There is even more to be said for the extension of the concept of literature to oral literature, to mere yarn-spinning, or to the popular song that returns literature to its oral origins. French and English literature is largely bookish, but many literatures are still in close contact with their origins in oral folklore: in Eastern Europe, in Asia and in Africa. A meaningful concept of literature as a worldwide phenomenon reaching into the dim past of humanity will include what in English has been called, awkwardly enough, "oral literature." Father Ong complains that the term implies that "oral poetry should have been written down but somehow was not." Verbal art, *Wortkunst,* may be a better term: it would include Homer, whom Milman Parry has shown to belong to an oral tradition. But even much later, in the Middle Ages, the history of literature is incomprehensible without the constant interchange between the oral and the written word. Without sharing the taste for the sentimental banalities and comic obscenities admired by Leslie Fiedler, we should grant the fructification of modern literature by what the Russian formalists describe as the periodic need of "rebarbarization." We seem to be in such a period, and can only hope that it will achieve the results that

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at the end of the eighteenth century flowed from the rediscovery of Scottish ballads and Elizabethan songs in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.*

This incorporation of the popular arts, of oral literature in a total concept of literature cannot, however, ignore the aesthetic question: there is good and bad popular art, as there is good and bad upperclass art. Paul Elmer More, a lover of detective stories, graded his collection into categories A, B and C, and presumably the same could be done with science fiction or even pornography. The question of quality, the distinction between art and nonart, is unavoidable.

All these objections to the concept of literature have one trait in common: they do not recognize quality as a criterion of literature: quality that may be either aesthetic or intellectual, but which in either case sets off a specific realm of verbal expression from daily transactions in language. This denial of quality runs counter to the whole long history of the term "literature" and the concept. It may be useful to glance at this history in order to see the debate in some perspective and to refute the strange notion of some recent commentators such as Maurice Blanchot and Roland Barthes, who consider the term and concept creations of the nineteenth century. What I can give is only a brief sketch for a topic that deserves a book-length study.

The term *literatura,* which obviously comes from *litera,* "letter" in Latin, was called by Quintilian a translation of the Greek *grammatiké:* it thus meant simply a knowledge of reading and writing. Cicero, however, speaks of Julius Caesar as having *literatura* in a list of his qualities that includes "good sense, memory, reflection and diligence." It must mean here something like "literary culture." We have to go to Tertullian and Cassian in the second century after Christ to find the term used for a body of writing. They contrast secular *literatura* with *scriptura,* pagan with Christian literature.

Much more prevalent, however, was the term *litterae* in Rome. Cicero speaks of *Graecae litterae* and of *studium humanitatis ac litterarum.* Aulus Gellius expressly identifies *humanitas* with the Greek *paideia; litterae* in antiquity are simply the study of the

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arts and letters of the Greeks as far as they represent the Greek idea of man. In practice the study of letters was the study of the Greek writers, of Homer and the writers of the Periclean age. I need not enter into the remote history of the rise of this conception in opposition to the oral tradition crystallized in the Homeric poems. Eric Havelock's *Preface to Plato* traced this evolution persuasively.

In the Middle Ages the terms were used rarely. *Literatus* or *literator* meant anybody acquainted with the art of reading and writing. With the establishment of the seven liberal arts, including the trivium, literature as a term seems to have disappeared, although poetry was recognized as an art assigned to grammar and rhetoric.

With the Renaissance a clear consciousness of a new secular literature emerges and with it the terms *litterae humanae, lettres humaines, bonnes lettres,* or as late as Dryden, "good letters." These terms were used widely by Rabelais, Du Bellay, Montaigne and other French writers of the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century the term "belles-lettres" emerged. In 1666 Charles Perrault proposed to Colbert, the minister of finance of Louis XIV, an Academy with a section of belles-lettres, which was to include grammar, eloquence and poetry. The term, as dictionaries show, was felt to be identical with *lettres humaines* and had nothing of the faintly derisive implication with which we today speak of the "belletristic." The French term spread quickly to England: Thomas Rymer used it in 1692. Hugh Blair became professor of rhetoric and belles-lettres at the University of Edinburgh in 1762.

By that time the term "literature" had reemerged in the sense of a knowledge of literature, of literary culture. La Bruyère speaks, in 1688, of "men of agreeable literature." Voltaire calls Chapelain a man of "immense literature" and in a dictionary article, defines literature as "a knowledge of the works of taste, a smattering of history, poetry, eloquence and criticism." Marmontel, Voltaire's follower, terms literature a "knowledge of belles-lettres" and contrasts it expressly with erudition. "With wit, talent, and taste," he promises, "one can produce ingenious

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works, without any erudition, and with little literature."

In English, the same meaning became established. Thus the antiquary John Selden was, in 1691, called "a person of infinite literature" and Boswell refers to Giuseppe Baretti as an "Italian of considerable literature." The use of the term survived in the nineteenth century when John Petherham wrote *A Sketch of the Progress and Present State of Anglo-Saxon Literature in England* (1840), where literature must mean the study of literature. (Incidentally, in the term "comparative literature," this older usage survives. It obviously means the comparative study of literatures and is not, as Lane Cooper complained, a "bogus term which makes neither sense nor syntax.")

Apparently, in the thirties of the eighteenth century the term "literature" began to be used as a designation for a body of writing. It occurs in François Granet's little-known *Réflexions sur les ouvrages de littérature* in 1737, and soon afterward in Voltaire. In Germany, Lessing applied it clearly to a body of writing in his *Briefe die neueste Literatur betreffend.* Tiraboschi's *Storia della letteratura italiana* is, I believe, the first work with the term on the title page. In England, the same shift of meaning took place. The New English Dictionary quotes the first example for "body of writing" in 1822. But George Coleman the elder thought in 1761 that "Shakespeare and Milton seem to stand alone, like first rate authors, amid the general wreck of old English literature." In 1778 Dr. Johnson wished, in a letter, that "what is undeservedly forgotten of our antiquated literature might be revived." Other examples from the later eighteenth century are not infrequent. Still, the first book in English called a *History of English Language and Literature,* by Robert Chambers, dates only from 1836.

In all the early uses literature and letters are used inclusively. The terms refer to many kinds of writing, not only the imaginative, but also writing of an erudite nature, to historiography, theology, philosophy and so on. Only much later was the term narrowed down to what we call today "imaginative literature," poetry and imaginative prose. The earliest clear declaration of this new use that I know of is in the preface to Carlo Denina's

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Discorso sopra le vicende della letteratura (1760), a book that was soon translated into French and English. Denina professes "not to speak of the progress of sciences and arts, which are not properly a part of literature." He will speak of works of learning only when they belong to "good taste, to eloquence, that is to say, to literature." That literature was used in this aesthetic sense at that time may be illustrated by the title of A. de Giorgo-Bertóla's *Idea della letteratura alemanna* (1784), which is an expanded version of an earlier *Idea della poesia alemanna* (1770); the change of title was forced by the inclusion of a new chapter on German novels, particularly on Goethe's *Sorrows of the Young Werther*.

To speak sweepingly, one can say that in older times, in antiquity and in the Renaissance, literature or letters was understood to include all writing of quality with any pretense to permanence. Poetry was set apart mainly because of the clear distinction made by verse. The view that there is an art of literature, a verbal are that includes poetry and prose as far as it is imaginative fiction, and thus excludes information and even rhetorical persuasion or didactic argumentation, emerged slowly with the whole system of the modern arts. It took about a century to prepare for Kant's *Critique of Judgment* (1790), which gave a clear formulation for distinguishing the good, the true and the useful from the beautiful. The slow rise in the prestige of the novel, long frowned upon as frivolous, collaborated in establishing a concept of literature parallel to the plastic arts and to music.

The meaning of a word is that given to it by its users. We cannot prevent anybody from speaking about campaign literature or about the literature relating to a pharmaceutical product. "Literature" has been and can be used to refer to anything in print. On the other hand it has more often meant, as I have shown, literary culture, the whole tradition of humane letters descending from antiquity. It meant for centuries works valued for their intellectual or imaginative eminence. In the eighteenth century the term often was narrowed down to cover all imaginative literature: the novel, the epic, the lyric poem, the play. In English the word "poetry" is limited more narrowly to works in verse.

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We cannot speak, as the Germans do, of Dostoevsky or Kafka as a *Dichter*. It is the way I have used the term "literature" in *Theory of Literature*. Often, of course, literature has been contrasted with poetry. Thus Benedetto Croce made a distinction between *letteratura* and *poesia*. *Letteratura* has a great civilizing function, but *poesia* stands apart, outside of history, limited to the great peaks of what we would call imaginative literature. Sartre in *What Is Literature?* draws the same distinction but values it differently. Literature is writing committed to changing man's consciousness, while poetry is assigned only a little nook and corner safely hidden from the stresses of history and historical change. Literature also has been used as a pejorative term for empty rhetoric, as in Verlaine's well-known poem *Art poétique*. He wanted to "wring the neck of eloquence"; he exalted music in poetry and concluded "Et tout le reste est littérature."

In understanding these lexical distinctions we shall be able to reject the wholesale attack on literature: the political attack, which makes literature a reactionary force although it obviously can be and has been the opposite; the linguistic attack, which despairs of the very possibility of speech; and the antiaesthetic attack, which revolts against quality and form in favor of subliterature or the impersonal permutations of the computer. Finally, the replacement of literature by the new media will seem a very unlikely event of the distant future. None of these theories touches the capacity of man to create works of literature also in the future. The forms of literature will no doubt change radically, but as long as there is man in any conceivable shape he will create—that is, speak, express and communicate in writing and in print his observations, his feelings, his desires, his ideas and his probings into himself and the nature of the world around him. Doubts about the exact limits of literature cannot obviate the difference between art and nonart, great and bad art, a Shakespeare play and a newspaper poem, a story by Tolstoy and a story in *True Confessions*. Doubts about language and its reach can only sharpen the poet's struggle to achieve what is difficult to formulate in language and to make him and us suspicious of the debasement of the word in propaganda, advertising and bad jour-

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nalism. Predictions of the end of literacy, of the triumph of television, should make us more aware of the need of a literary culture. The new barbarism, the know-nothingism, the mindless repudiation of the past in favor of so-called "relevance"—one trusts that these are only a passing mood of this country and decade of ours. We may reflect that this crisis of the concept of literature is confined to small, largely academic circles in France and the United States. It also flourishes among a group of neo-Marxists in Western Germany. It has not, I think, affected England, although in the writings of Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart the uses of culture and literacy have been subjected to a stringent examination. Doubts about literature and its uses are, I think, completely absent in the Communist world because there literature has been made a tool for the education and indoctrination of the masses.

We cannot predict the shape of things to come: in 1872 nobody could have forecast, in any detail, the literary situation as it is today. But there remain basic certainties: there will be, I am sure, no silence, no incessant murmur, as forecast by Blanchot. There will still be the voices of men of letters and poets, in verse or prose, who will speak (as they have done since hoary antiquity) for their society and for mankind. Mankind will always need a voice and a record of that voice in writing and print, in literature.

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Prides Crossing

PHILIP BOOTH

Born to Prides Crossing,
privately tutored; finished

at Foxcroft, engaged to
Groton and Harvard, wed

after the Coral Sea
and Midway; bride

to Treasury, wife
to Wall Street and mother

to Gracie Square, she
has been first mate

on three Bermuda races,
and is newly mistress

of one round-the-world
teak ketch. Aboard,

at her grandfather's
inlaid desk, far in

the Caribbean, she
times to her forty-

sixth birthday
her annual letter

to her last tutor.
Her hand is impeccably

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North Shore italic:
Since Arthur's corporate

interests require him
to be in Aruba one day

and North of the Arctic
Circle the next, we

live somewhat separate
lives. Whit has been

asked to depart St. Paul's,
after drugs; we don't know

where he goes next. Jilly,
whom you last saw

the summer she was about
to start Chapin,

I have just now flown back
to New York to abort.

I have been hospitalized
myself, but am out

again for a third try.
At least I refuse

what my friends still
in Boston seem nowadays

to feast on: the sacrilege
of an easy Jesus.

Please do not
send me condolences;

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I know you will not.
Her script slants

increasingly small: *I sit*
to write you aboard

an anchored sailboat, with my
own name on her transom.

She is perfectly furled. I
am afloat, the crew is ashore;

every halyard and sheet
is perfectly coiled. I sit

wondering, now, if life
will ever unbraid

itself. Or do
I mean unsnarl

itself? I know that you
cannot tell me this . . .

But how, if it does,
will I know that it has?

✪ Two volumes of PHILIP BOOTH's poems have been published: *Margins: A Sequence of New and Selected Poems,* and *Weathers and Edges.*

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Complex Systems: The Case for a Marriage of Science and Intuition

MICHAEL A. ARBIB

ONE OF MY GOOD FRIENDS, much concerned with putting growing knowledge of the brain in the context of ourselves as human beings, posed the following questions:

What *kind* of understanding of brain and behavior can be forecast? What imaginative and positive possibilities does it open up?

What will a mechanistic theory mean for our concept of ourselves?

How can we ensure happy and beneficial uses of our knowledge? What responses or changes can we expect in our social and political environment if we stimulate it with the possibility of the control that an exact knowledge of the brain might make possible?

It would have been easy to reply, "The business of the scientist concerns experiments and theories and attempts to assess objectively the relationship between them," and politely decline to answer these questions. But having debated these issues with friends and students, having tried to awaken audiences both large and small to the ways in which cybernetics (the study of control and communication in man and in machines) can change ourselves and our society, and having tried to convince students that they should attempt to relate their scientific studies to their social concerns, I felt bound to make some answer. But in doing so, let me make it clear that the ratio of personal opinion to incontrovertible fact is higher here than in more conventionally scientific writings, and that it certainly is possible to disagree violently with some of

✪ MICHAEL A. ARBIB's article is adapted from a chapter in his book *The Metaphorical Brain,* published by Wiley-Interscience and presented here with their permission. Mr. Arbib is chairman of Computer and Information Science at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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the pronouncements of this paper, irrespective of your agreement with the brain theory I have set forth in *The Metaphorical Brain,* which provides the conceptual framework for the personal opinions expressed here. In particular, I shall not only attempt to answer the questions about the brain raised by my friend, but shall also consider corollary questions raised by the primitive "artificial intelligence" we can now program into our computers. Although I hope that some of my comments are valuable in themselves, my aim is not to provide the right answers, but rather to show that these questions are worth answering.

What kind of understanding of brain and behavior can be forecast? What imaginative and positive possibilities does it open up?

We have certain words for describing overall properties of our mental activity, words such as "consciousness" and "intelligence," which must be taken to refer not to single entities, but rather to multiple properties, each based on a cooperative phenomenon, that is, a product of interaction within a highly structured array of millions upon millions of neurons. When we consider that physics is as yet unable to explicitly solve highly simplified equations that describe a three-dimensional magnet, we see that even if the ordinary laws of the physical scientist were adequate to account for all aspects of what we consider to be intelligent or conscious behavior, we would still have a long way to go before we could explain such phenomena as intelligence and consciousness by applying those physical laws. In fact, we may find that as we study more complicated systems by the methods of physical science, so will more "correction terms" be required in the physical laws. We found that we needed to modify Newtonian mechanics to get relativity when we entered the domain of the very fast; and we needed to modify them again to get the laws of quantum mechanics when we entered the domain of the very small. Thus we must not be unprepared to have to find yet new laws of physics when we enter the domain of the very complex. But the fact remains that these would still be the laws of matter, of energy, of physics, and not mystical laws postulating properties of some entity that does

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not evolve from the highly cooperative phenomena of physical entities.

It is known that if there is any kind of definite cause and effect relationship between the lifelong sequences of electric pulses leaving and entering the brain, it can be implemented by a suitable switching network. We must treat this statement with care, however, because it does not mention the size of the network involved: the challenge to one who would explain the workings of the brain is not to show that some hypothetical machine could carry out certain tasks, but rather to show how a machine that can fit into a human skull can do the task. And this is not always easy to see.

Again, in trying to understand the mechanism of the brain, we must look at how far computers have come in a few decades and compare this with the fact that hundreds of millions of years of evolution were required to get the central nervous system to its present complexity. This comparison of decades with millions of years is somewhat misleading, however, because in the case of computers there has been conscious design by an active intelligence, whereas in the case of evolution, we ascribe the "design" to undirected factors interacting with one another, without the intervention of an external intelligence. In any case, we must be aware of the immense gap between current computer programs and general human intelligence. Also we should note that most current programs only simulate those aspects of problem-solving close to the verbal level. Thus they do not really explain how we think, but rather indicate an orderly level underlying the seemingly random output. Of course, it is one of the challenges of this type of research to see whether, in fact, we can ascribe such intermediate levels to actual functioning within the brain. Let me assert here the dependence of human intelligence upon a highly structured brain, which has sufficient mechanisms and sufficient storage capacity to be able to mediate and accommodate a great deal of learning during a lifetime. Just as a computer has to have certain basic routines wired in before it is possible for us to program in higher-level languages, so must there be a basic substrate of genetically determined brain structure, memory mechanisms, and thus be-

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havior in the newborn baby if he is to learn enough to develop into an intelligent adult.

The human brain is so complex that exact prediction of its behavior is essentially impossible, but approximate prediction at different levels of description may well be possible. There is too much for us to understand about the detailed interaction of ten billion neurons, but we may understand how the neurons in one layer of a brain structure may act together to yield a certain type of activity (and thus how changes in cellular activity induced by drugs will change the type of activity in that layer); we may understand how the layers of a structure may yield the overall function of a subsystem (and so find better ways of building visual prostheses to provide preprocessed light signals to the visual cortex of a blind human); we may understand how subsystems with different gross modes of activity may interact when combined in different ways (and so provide the basis for a truly rational neurosurgery); we may understand how different types of relationships with other people and the rest of the environment can change the growth of a human's mind (and so make education a joyous part of life instead of a tedious ritual conducted in the confines of the classroom); and, continuing up from neurophysiology and psychology to sociology and political science, if we can understand how small groups of people may help and encourage one another, perhaps we can build upon this to form a peaceful and creative world.

It should be noted that, as we progressed up this list of imaginative and positive possibilities, the time scale of achievement came to seem longer and longer. It is now within our reach to understand the effects of drugs on small parts of the brain and to build visual prostheses; a rational neurosurgery that can remove a tumor or cure epilepsy with minimal disruption to the personality still seems elusive but not impossible; but while the tasks of education and world peace are so mired in prejudice and old wives' tales, and so lacking in a common framework for rational discussion, hopes for any cumulative progress at times seem dark indeed. Perhaps the very fact that we can descry such a progression is some cause for encouragement, nonetheless. Our problem, whether we seek to understand the brain or to improve our world,

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is that we have little true appreciation of the complexity of the systems we study or the patience and length of time required to gain some true understanding.

What will a mechanistic theory mean for our concept of ourselves?

Given the increasingly sophisticated repertoire of behaviors of which robots are capable, it becomes clear that a mechanistic theory of the brain does not entail reducing humans to machines of a dull sort, but rather extends our understanding of what a mechanism can be. Given that there are many humans who lavish immense care and attention to keep their cars in perfect condition, but ignore their children (or beat them when they can't ignore them), one might even suggest that if people were to view each other "only" as intricate mechanisms they would be far kinder to each other! In any case, one need love another no less for appreciating something of the bodily and neural mechanisms that underlie his charm. For many of our everyday relationships with people, the language we have evolved over the millennia will express what we want to say; but if we would find new techniques for meditation, or a drug to dispel depression, then we must probe within for the law of human functioning. In short, a mechanistic theory—if appreciated for its full subtlety—need not destroy a humanistic conception of ourselves but may enrich it by helping us to find a better measure of our true complexity and diversity.

In pondering the apparent freedom and spontaneity of our thought, we must realize that this stems from the complexity of the internal models of our worlds that we form in our brains, and from the fact that most of the mechanistic underpinning is unconscious. We make a very bad mistake when we equate the computing that our brain does with the thoughts of which we are conscious. It is very hard to understand by introspection the actual process of retrieving information from memory, for it often seems as if consciousness posed a question, and the rest of the brain supplied the answer—just as at an information desk we may ask a question and an elaborate machinery, of which we are unaware, produces the answer.

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Physical explainability is compatible with our cherished belief in human uniqueness. When we consider the large amount of information that is contained in the genetic code of each person (and that the code differs from person to person except in the case of twins), and when we add to this the huge variety of experiences that each person encounters (and here even twins differ), then we see that it is inevitable that, as systems with a brain that can store so much of this individual experience, we must end up as unique individuals. When, as in *The Metaphorical Brain,* we use the metaphor "humans are machines," we must beware of the fallacy that we have reduced humans to the kinds of machines that we currently know. When Darwin's theory of evolution made it possible to say that "humans are animals," there was violent reaction because many people were quite convinced that they were not just animals. The point is, of course, that the theory of evolution did not reduce us to the level of the other animals. Rather, it broadened our concept of *animal* to indicate that there was an essential continuity in all living things on earth, and that humans were not set apart from that continuity. Through comparative anatomy and physiology we can gain much insight from this continuity, and at the same time we can realize and study those things that set humans apart from other animals—just as, I presume, a cat with a human amount of consciousness could set cats apart and study that which is essentially feline. In saying that humans are machines, we must not ape those Darwinists who insisted that we were but monkeys and ignored the differences. Rather, we must accept the challenge to develop our ideas of mechanism, so that we may eventually understand just what extra powers relative to present-day machines a mechanism must have if it is to share more and more of our human attributes.

How can we ensure happy and beneficial uses of our knowledge? What responses or changes can we expect in our social and political environment if we stimulate it with the possibility of the control that an exact knowledge of the brain might make possible?

I cannot pretend to know the answers to these important ques-

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tions, but I can at least make some comments that may help to provide a framework within which answers may evolve. To answer the first question, we need both a greater self-awareness than we now possess (what constitutes a happy and beneficial use?) and a faith that science can be an ingredient in achieving happiness. I shall indicate some steps toward self-awareness, and indicate why I do not share the disillusionment in science and technology that has become so fashionable of late. The second question invites us to pretend to know more than we do, for an exact knowledge of the brain is far off. It is not clear that an exact knowledge of the brain would have made Attila the Hun more of a scourge, and advances in the neurosciences would have had little to add to the horror of Hitler's genocide of the Jews or to the agony of being napalmed in Vietnam. In some sense, then, the answer to the second question must merge with that of the first. We have to determine what we, as humans, really want (and this no doubt will change from time to time, since we are creatures of fashion, as well as varying from individual to individual), and we have to find a system of government (more or less of it, as the case may be) that will help us to achieve our goals. It is only as part of this process that we can determine whether the neurosciences are to be employed to help us use the full capability of our brains or to reduce the use of those brains to a restricted set of functions decreed by some limited ideology or regime.

I should like to describe why I believe that we *can* build a technology that will adapt to the individual rather than a technology that demands that the individual adapt to it, and to indicate within this description some of the processes involved in increasing our self-awareness. For many people nowadays the computer has become the symbol both of technology and of conformity—as that thing that forces us to identify ourselves as a string of numbers, causing people to cry out in protest, "I am human! Do not spindle, fold or mutilate *me!*" This antagonistic view of technology, however, would seem to be based on the same limited view of mechanism that we have already sought to dispel in reconciling a mechanistic viewpoint with a truly humanistic one. For example, few people realize that computers can, paradoxically, mass-produce

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individuality, enabling technology to have that flexibility that allows individuality to flourish. There seems to be a strange reversal at work here. If one is prepared to return to a primitive lifestyle, one's idiosyncrasies may flourish. But having discovered the comforts of electricity and plumbing, and having come to rely on a modicum of modern medical care, it is too easy to become just a consumer, awash in a sea of standardized products. Regaining our individuality will of course require individual commitments and experiments in music and literature, personal relations, and our "inner lives," but what may be less obvious is that the process may be helped by using the computer to allow assembly lines to tailor-make products without losing the economies of mass production, and to enable bureaucrats to look up from their paper work to talk to the people behind the statistics. Rather than catalogue the novel uses to which computers may eventually be put, I would argue that a true science of human action must be predicated on a complex view of the human brain that, once assimilated, can only foster the evolution of a convergence of technology and the humanities.

Any science that supposedly captures reality in two or three equations is inadequate to describe the systems formed by both brain and society—systems with billions of variables. Thus it would seem that, given the incomplete state of our formal theories, we must complement them with our everyday knowledge as members of society. In short, our rational analysis of society must strike a balance between precise description of certain subsystems and, quite frankly, intuition and feeling about other problems. This position is not anti-intellectual; rather it calls for a scrupulous honesty, which can recognize when formal approaches have and have not surpassed the implicit understanding given by having a brain and body evolved for life in a complex world. The current split that seems to be growing between the technocracy on the one hand and the counterculture of the youth and the hippies on the other hand (as spelled out by Roszak in *The Making of a Counter Culture*) is, I think, one that can be mended as we come to understand better the strengths and limitations of science in discussing systems as complex as society. In other words, as we

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study more and more complex systems, we must understand that design engineering is as much a product of creativity of feeling and empathy crucially tempered by technical knowledge, as it is the straightforward exercise of limited technical expertise.

Problems of large numbers, such as those posed by the drastic increases in urban population of the last few decades, introduce new problems of scale that we cannot solve by good will unaided by technology. In a society with as many people as ours, then, we have to find some way of simultaneously increasing our understanding of what we can be as individuals in a society, and seeing how we can develop a technology better suited to our needs. But such demands raise paradoxes. We now know that it is possible to avoid dying from all manner of diseases by proper medical care, and it would not be easy for us to go back to seeing our loved ones die at an early age, racked by some hideous ailment. On the other hand, we may not welcome the undue prolongation of a pained existence for the aged. While blessing technology for removing much of the evil of early death, we curse it at the same time for providing us with the problem of overpopulation.

Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., in his book *The Sirens of Titan,* tells us a legend that should give us some thought as to how we choose our goals. Tralfamadore is a planet that is populated (or "machinated"?) only by machines. Of course the machines, being very intelligent, wonder about where they came from, and although no one knows for sure, since their origin is shrouded in antiquity, there is a legend that once upon a time Tralfamadore was populated by living beings who were always seeking to understand their purpose in life. As their knowledge increased, they were able to see that most of their activity didn't justify working toward a higher purpose, and so they built machines that could take over these clearly unimportant functions. As time went by, more and more of what had originally occupied the time of living beings was turned over to the machines, until eventually the machines were so sophisticated that the beings were able to assign them the task of finding out the beings' higher purpose. The machines, being more objective and more efficient, soon were able to report back that the beings didn't have a higher purpose! Hating nothing

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more than purposeless creatures, the beings set about slaughtering each other. It turned out the machines could do that better, too. . . .

So, no matter how good our objective science is, there always comes a stage at which a rational approach to life demands that we say, "I'm going to postulate certain things, and structure my life in a way that fits in with those postulates." Perhaps the postulate we should make here is that "Individual humans are worthy." Unfortunately, when we leave the safe confines of mathematics, deducing from postulates is not at all easy. If individual humans are worthy, perhaps one might argue that we should have as many as possible, and that each woman should thus spend her whole life in pregnancy, to increase the number of worthy individuals who can consecrate themselves. I would rather believe that this postulate means that we have an obligation to make the world, and the society that is the interface between the world and the individual, a place in which each individual can in some sense express himself fully; that we must stop overpopulation while there still exists wilderness where we can appreciate the grandeur and the silence. I don't know how to push through the implications of this axiom, but I think it is well for those of us who are used to thinking in terms of well-set scientific criteria, which can be developed objectively, to realize that when we get into the domain of social affairs there really are no ultimate givens.

On a naïve level we might think that the good society is one in which everybody is happy—the politics of ecstasy. Brain experiments have shown, however, that "ecstasy" is all too easy to achieve. One experiment involved placing an electrode in what has been called the "pleasure center" of a rat's brain and teaching it that if it presses a lever at one end of a box it will get a charge, but that it then has to go to the other end of the box to press another lever to get the next charge, and so on. Stimulation of the pleasure center appears to be so desirable that if an electrified grid is placed between the two levers—a grid that delivers a shock so intense that even a starving rat will not cross it to get to food—the rat with the electrode will keep running back and forth across it, enduring great pain so long as it can ensure stimulation of its pleasure center at each end. Such an experiment raises horrible visions of a so-

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ciety in which everything is wrong save that the citizens all have their little electrodes rosy. Why do we feel uneasy about such a society, if indeed everyone has achieved ecstasy?

Perhaps the resolution is in the observation: "The brain has billions of neurons. Think of all you can do with that. If you're just going to keep charging some small pleasure center and go ooh, ooh all the time, you've thrown away your birthright." This suggests that one quality of a good society is that the people in it can really make use of the truly fantastic power of their brains.

Some people will solve the problem of their own relationships to modern society by settling some of the remaining open land, establishing communes, tilling the soil, living relatively free from the strains of modern society. But the number of such people is terribly small (especially if the communes are to be genuinely self-supporting), and we must face the tension between how we realize our own selves and how we contribute to society-wide solutions. In finding these solutions we have to feel with our senses, our whole being, on the one hand, and to know what it is that we really want out of a society. But on the other hand, we must understand very well the problems of scale that call for technological solutions that do not just give us bigger gadgets but really help us achieve our humanly felt needs.

We can take a great cathedral as the epitome of this. Whether we are religious or not, in a cathedral our senses soar as we feel the rise of the building and bathe in the beauty of light playing through stained glass. And yet, if the builders of that cathedral hadn't been brilliant engineers, it would have fallen down seven hundred years ago.

As we reshape our own society, we must use our knowledge to achieve this awareness, this joy.

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The Age of Overutilization

C. L. MENGIS

WE ARE ALL SHOWMEN, we medics. We use our personalities, our bedside manner, our medical knowledge, our connections, to impress our patients, some of us to better effect than others. In addition, to bolster this effect, or perhaps to bolster our own egos, we now have at our disposal an array of machines and procedures that would make any quack turn green with envy. As a matter of fact, a few of our late-lamented impresarios of the more ethical world must be turning over in their graves at having missed out on this shiny, glassy, instrumentalized world of today. All they had were cardiographs, fluoroscopes and spirometers, and in their age there was, I think, a majority of skeptical patients with some doubt about newfangled machines so like the ones used by quacks and chiropractors. Now the whole country has gone ape over our electronic, plastic, fantastically complicated armamentarium. With these machines we have accomplished miracles of cure and survival. Never has so much effort and money been expended for so few people. If, however, a twenty-year-old woman dying of kidney disease can be kept alive and reasonably well on an expensive dialyzer (not nearly so expensive now), or a middle-aged man be safely carried past the shoals of an acute heart attack by close electronic monitoring, or a youngster with a deformed heart valve cured by surgery requiring a cardiac bypass, then that expense and close attention surely must be justified.

Some of us utilize that world more than others. To put it

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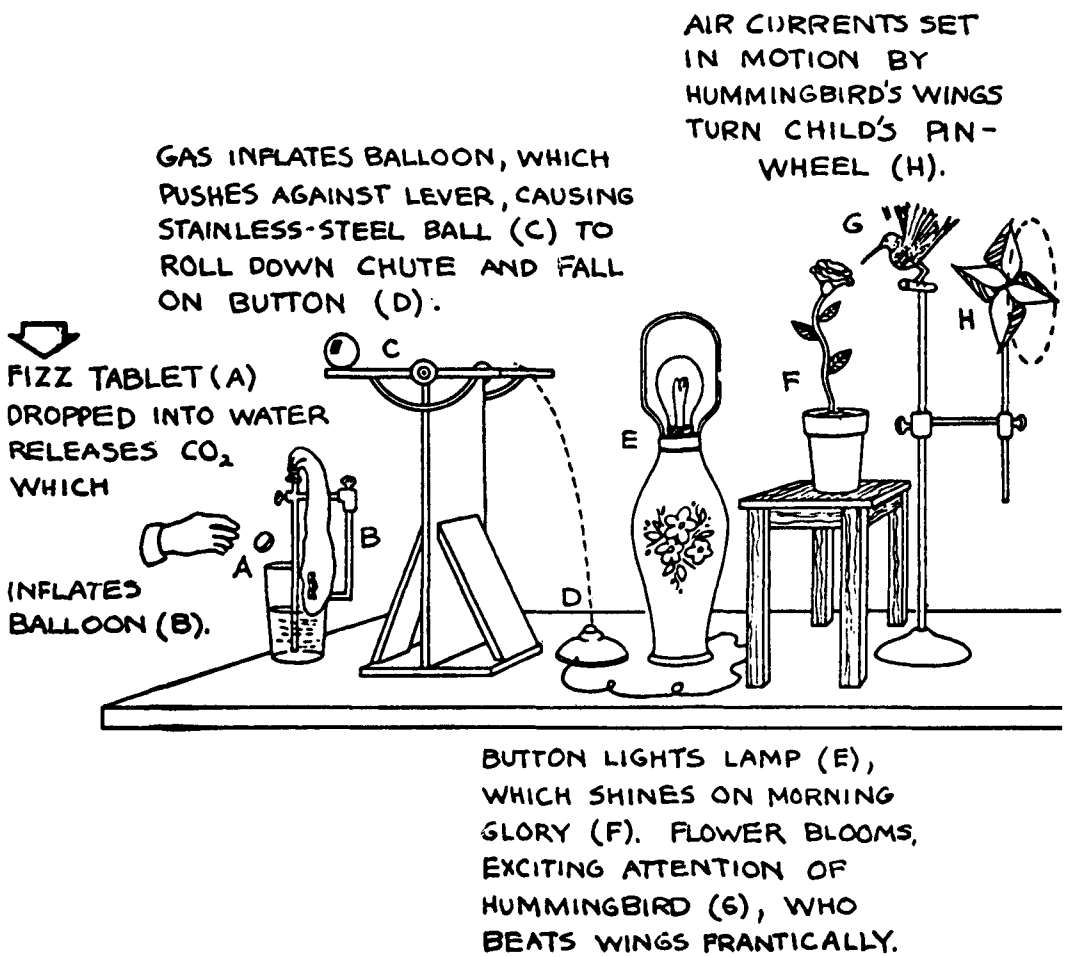
bluntly, some of us overutilize our machines, not always in the interest of the patient, either, but for showmanship or to make up for holes in our ego or our training.

Let me cite some examples:

A certain volatile contractor has been in and out of my office sporadically for several years. When he is excited, which he usually is, his blood pressure is astronomical, but his heart-size on x-ray has remained normal, and so has his cardiograph,



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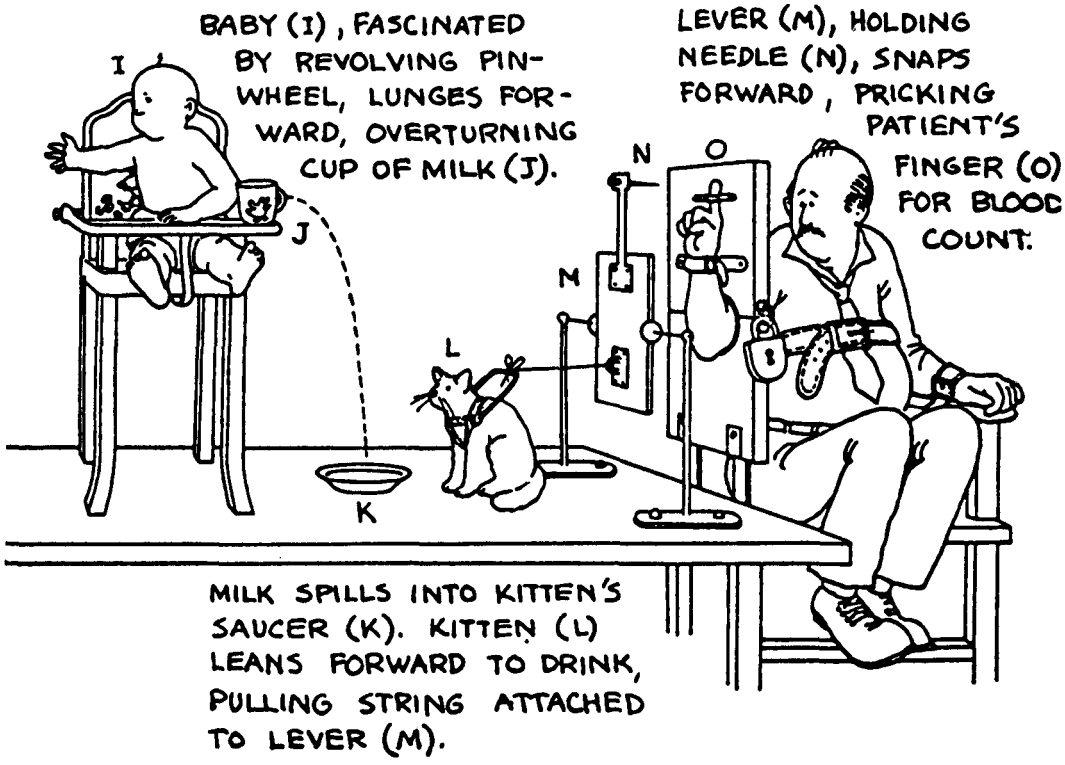
and, on forced hyperventilation (rapid deep breathing) that astronomical pressure drops to normal within a few seconds. It was also normal through the night on the one occasion when I hospitalized him several years ago. He had the usual minimal work-up for hypertension, with checks on kidney function and investigation of various forms of adrenal overactivity, and was then put on a mild blood pressure sedative, which he usually failed to take, and asked to come back for periodic rechecks, which he



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also failed to do. Not long ago I saw him again in the office for some unrelated minor event, and he told me he'd been talking with a contractor friend of his, who advised him to report to a certain clinic in the state for a "good checkup." Five clinic doctors put him through these tests again, then subjected him to a radioactive scan of the kidneys and in addition, injected dye into his aorta and made x-rays while the dye passed through the renal circulation, a test not without some hazard. He was then told they thought he'd be all right, and was put on essentially the same medication he'd been on already. He was enchanted as he told me, with shining eyes, that it had cost him fifteen hundred dollars (but fortunately he had Blue Cross coverage). When I told him that I'd given him the same reliable information for much less and added what P. T. Barnum said about his ilk—in a friendly manner, of course—he was offended, not at them, but at me. I haven't seen him since.

I did have satisfaction in a way, when I later saw another gentleman in his fifties who had a serious hypertension with enlarged heart and abnormal cardiograph and who had also been through the circus twice, with many fancy tests. They had neglected to check the blood pressure in his legs; it was virtually absent. He has now been cured of his problem by a competent cardiovascular surgeon, who bypassed the obstruction in the thoracic aorta that was responsible for the high blood pressure in his head and arms.

The heart association in our state reported recently—in the newspapers, of course—that it had found heart murmurs in seven children entering the first grade in one of our communities, by monitoring them all with phonocardiography. Two of the seven had organic murmurs of congenital heart disease. Impressive—until you read the statement by the medical adviser, who is a basically honest man, that all the murmurs had been previously detected, and that the two children with organic murmurs were under the care of their family doctors. Probably in a less-pampered community, electronic screening would be more productive.

Not too long ago our state's Tuberculosis and Respiratory

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Disease Association bought twenty-one intermittent positive pressure respirators to be used for outpatent lung ventilation therapy in emphysema and chronic bronchitis. We are all aware that these machines are invaluable adjuncts in short-time ventilation crises in delivering oxygen under positive pressure to postoperative patients who, because of pain or debility, cannot or will not breathe deeply enough to ventilate their lungs properly, predisposing them to postoperative pneumonias. We have all seen patients with advanced emphysema suffocating in their own carbon dioxide or dying from oxygen lack, who have been promptly rescued from the brink by these machines, but it must make any thinking person give pause when he considers the effect of long-term repeated distension of already overdistended lungs, and many researchers have speculated on this. In October, 1968, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* carried as its lead article a carefully-matched outpatient series from the Veteran's Administration Hospital at Madison, Wisconsin—fifty outpatients followed on the machine, fifty without. The rate of annual deterioration of the FEV_1 (the amount of air the individual can forcefully expel from his lungs in one second) was ninety-nine cubic centimeters per year in the ventilated patients as compared to forty-four cubic centimeters per year in the unventilated patients; that is, the ventilated patients lost more than twice the amount of functioning lung volume per year as did the unventilated patients. Several studies since then have confirmed the increased deterioration with long-term positive-pressure ventilation, as well as the hazards of oxygen toxicity. I mentioned this to a colleague here who ventilates his emphysematous patients regularly. He retorted, "Oh, but they feel so much better after their treatments." People with back trouble feel better after chiropractic manipulations, which we physicians feel does harm by tearing the muscles. I fail to see the difference.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation in a neighboring state has for several years run a center to which patients are brought for two weeks to be ventilated and trained in breathing techniques. They all feel well when they go home. Whether this is real or psychological, and whether it will affect their

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survival rate, is yet to be seen. One thing is certain: it is expensive.

Pulmonary function tests have been devised, involving shiny spirometers, oscilloscopes, oximeters, tests of arterial blood gases, and so on. These are all great for quantitatively evaluating pulmonary function for the use of absentee examining boards. Whether they add much to the competent physician's understanding of his patient's situation, except where the patient is unconscious, direly ill, and being breathed, is debatable.

Many reports have appeared in medical literature, and in lay advertising, about the advisability of having annual comprehensive medical checkups. Most of the abnormalities found have been insignificant, having little bearing on morbidity or survival. The fact is that, in intelligent people who feel well, only a very few procedures are likely to uncover significant abnormalities. In the army, where annual physicals for officers had been a fetish for years, they were stopped when an individual felt well; only a urinalysis and chest x-ray were obtained and blood pressure determined (and a cardiograph done on men over forty, which was not very fruitful either), because this was where the majority of significant findings appeared in asymptomatic men. Add to that the pelvic examination in women, and you have most insidious diseases covered, those not manifested by obvious lumps, bumps, or symptoms.

As to the prediction of heart disease, we have not progressed to the point where we can reliably say to an individual that he is or is not in imminent danger, and to rely on a physician's clean bill of health after a checkup is foolish. Dr. Richard Asher summarizes it thus:

> Business men and high-up executives like to have "complete checkups" at regular intervals, when they can go into a clinic for a lot of expensive investigations. This emphasizes their importance ("We always have the Rolls decarbonized every 5000 miles to keep it in tip-top condition, but we don't bother about the utility van"), and it also gives them a feeling of security, as they come out of the clinic rejuvenated by a comforting illusion of physical decarbonization. But the analogy with motorcar engines is false, and the only

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point where it applies is that when the trouble is very serious the patient is likely to be returned to his Maker.

The Federal Aviation Administration has taken to doing complete examinations on airline pilots every six months, but pilots still suffer heart-attacks in the cockpit, either unheralded or with premonitory symptoms concealed. Yet large medical groups have been built on annual extensive checkups, and otherwise sage businessmen make annual pilgrimages to these citadels of showmanship without the least doubt of necessity.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, please do not think I am against showmanship. No one admires an elegant performance more than I. Two important points arise, however, which are interconnected: 1) These productions are expensive, requiring institutional or government financing, and, being located perforce in institutions such as hospitals, they gain an aura of respectability that they may not merit. 2) They often incite the enthusiasm of misguided laymen who have no insight into their real value—or lack of it—but who judge them for their superficial impressiveness and the amount of money and publicity they will bring into the institution.

That they may benefit a certain physician or group of physicians, to the detriment of more honest or conservative groups, without any real benefit to patients, is of little moment. Elizabeth Drew's account in the *Atlantic Monthly* a few years back of the conquest of Congress by a socialite lobbyist for the Heart Disease, Cancer, and Stroke Program, which she labeled as one of the worst health measures ever to emanate from that less than august body, is an object lesson of how an influential little group could play on the fears of a body of aging men to make them cough up a lot of money that has largely gone not for the "cure" of heart disease, cancer, and stroke, but into the coffers of university building funds and medical entrepreneurs, the first large federal medical pork barrel, a truly corrupting experience in American medicine.

Three or four years ago, the Vocational Rehabilitation Administration offered to buy for our new medical school a dialyzer

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to be used for the benefit of all patients in the state who needed it to keep them alive and reasonably well when their kidneys failed. The medical school, which had one dialyzer for use in acute cases only, turned the offer down because they could not afford to hire one technician to keep it going. (I am happy to say that this situation has now been corrected.) Yet at the same time a very expensive communications system—of doubtful value in my book—is in the works for the isolated southwestern section of the state, and the Regional Medical Program was for a while considering telemetry of electrocardiograms from the regional small hospitals to ours, although this was not requested by any of these hospitals, and was opposed by physicians in most of them.

To me it boils down to a willy-nilly system of pet projects or hobby-riding, most of which will end up in the attic. Every large hospital has an attic full of pet projects, and every large hospital has a few squeaky wheels that continue to demand the grease for future attic junk. Now they have the specific-disease pressure groups, the consumer pressure groups, and most generous of all, the United States government, to help them build truly monumental junk heaps.

This is not a brief for therapeutic nihilism, but a bid for insight into the real value of what we do—a commodity in short supply in these days of narrower specialization and research for its own sake. We would do well to recall William Osler's admonition to his contemporaries hipped on asafetida and flowers of sulfur: that he knew of only seven drugs of significant value. We flounder in a widening sea of words and machines, most of which will seem quaint and superfluous to the doctor of tomorrow.

We must be careful that the independent practitioner of medicine does not also end up in the junk heap. Ambitious professors and administrators, empire builders liberally fortified with federal funds already obtained while the individual physician labored in the vineyards, have presented a skewed picture to the American public of dramatic and esoteric surgical procedures in large medical centers and centers for treatment of

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certain types of disease, implying that nowhere else could adequate care be obtained. I know of no better way to destroy the pride and the efficacy of local medical care.

In the push and pull of well-funded lobbyists, ambitious egomaniacs, insatiable grant eaters and naïve legislators, we small individualists may well succumb to collectivization, herded into groups for standardization of therapy, pay and thought.

It is the opinion of this observer that the present moderate leadership of organized medicine, which seems to have sunk into a torpor of me-tooism since its predecessors' disastrous campaign against "socialized medicine," could do the whole populace a service by rousing itself to emphasize the dignity, ability and dedication of the average physician under any system of reward, and the economy, security and emotional advantages to the patient of placing his trust in his own familiar physician.

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Teacher Image and the Hidden Curriculum

GEORGE GERBNER

"THE FIGURE OF THE SCHOOLTEACHER," wrote Richard Hofstadter in *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life,* "may well be taken as a central symbol in any society." But a symbol of what? Searching for an answer is like opening Pandora's box with its host of evils. My examination of the evidence suggests that teachers, schools and scholars project a synthetic cultural image that helps to explain—and determine—the ambivalent functions and paradoxical fortunes of the educational enterprise in American society. The clues that point to that disquieting conclusion (which also raises questions about anticipated extensions of the present structure of culture-power) have led me to new reflections. These concern the illusions and reality of schooling, the nature of symbolic functions, the lessons of national and cross-cultural research on the teacher image, and the role of that "hidden curriculum" in social policy.

The basic features of American schools, as of our society, have been fixed for more than a century. Spectacular changes transformed the quality of life by unfolding and extending those features into every aspect of existence. Among the most dramatic of the changes has been the rise of institutions of cultural mass production—the mass media—exempt from the laws of public, but not of private, corporate development and authority. These institutions have taken over many functions performed in the past by the parent, the church and the school. The media's

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chief impact stems from their universality as the common bond among *all* groups in our culture. The media manufacture the shared symbolic environment, create and cultivate large heterogeneous publics, define the agenda of public discourse, and represent all other institutions in the vivid imagery of fact and fiction designed for mass publics. Teachers and schools no longer enjoy much autonomy, let alone their former monopoly, as the public dispensers of knowledge. The formal educational enterprise exists in a cultural climate largely dominated by the informal "curriculum" of the mass media.

New developments in communication technology may both individualize and globalize the penetration of mass-produced messages into the mainstream of collective consciousness. Before we can consider what that new transformation might portend for our schools (and for our culture), we need to take a fresh and sober look at the omens from the past.

Many of those who would correct the evils of society slowly and painlessly have long argued for educational extension, improvement and reform. And, for more than a century, schooling has been extended, improved and reformed. Yet it is still compulsory, unequal, class-biased, racist and sexist. From the Coleman report on *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966) through the Jencks report on *Inequality* (1972), study after study demonstrates that the schools, even when "equal," tend to justify rather than rectify the child's fate as defined by the culture of the home, the street and the television.

Eminent public figures declare schools a "disaster area" and "a pathological sector of the economy," meaning that even money can't cure what ails them (although that remedy has never really been tried on a large national scale). A few call for their abolition. Instead of becoming the social corrective that idealistic reformers sought and democratic rhetoric promised, the more schools change the more they streamline their induction of young people into their places and roles in the existing social structure. The Mason-Dixon line has been abolished between the states, but its modern equivalent now rings every city, and the few bridges busing children across it may be dismantled. Schools still provide custodial

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drill for the poor, enrichment for the rich, and equal instruction for those with equal economic or political clout.

We are just beginning to understand that these harsh facts do not result from accidental aberration or cultural lag. A new generation of "revisionist" historians of education has exploded "The Great School Legend." Colin Greer's book by that title shows how the perennial "crisis" of the schools, like the perpetual "problem" of the slums, is in fact more functional to the existing social order than would be its elimination. Michael B. Katz's book, *Class, Bureaucracy, and the Schools: The Illusion of Educational Change in America,* documents the recurring phenomenon of school reform movements that engage the zeal and energies of those who would attack the iniquities of society, only to find each wave of "reform" harnesses their schools to the dominant interests of the times.

Nearly twenty years after the Supreme Court ordered school desegregation "with all deliberate speed," feeble efforts at enforcement bog down in political controversy, just as, before that, the parochial school aid controversy was used to defeat proposals for massive federal financing. Busing is claimed to threaten the fiber of society when it brings children of different races and social classes together, but not when used to keep them apart—its traditional use. If "campus unrest" is followed by recession and cutbacks, who is to blame? The schools that should redeem us teeter at the edge of bankruptcy. It seems that when citizens consider what is nearest and dearest to them, like children, they are most vulnerable to the deceptions of their culture.

Symbolic Functions

We are keenly aware that messages intended to persuade usually serve the purposes of those who create and disseminate them. Less obvious, but perhaps even more crucial, are the purposes served by news, fiction, drama and other storytelling, designed with no other obvious or conscious intent than just to inform or to entertain. The social tasks to which presumably "objective" news, "neutral" fiction or "nontendentious" enter-

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tainment lend themselves are what I call symbolic functions. They are the consequences inherent in the way things work in the symbolic world of storytelling.

These functions usually do not stem from individual communications or campaigns, but from the general composition and structure of the bulk of the symbolic environment to which an entire community is exposed. The consequences typically are not those of change, but of continuity and resistance to change. Given a stable social order, the functions are usually to selectively cultivate existing tendencies, and perhaps to deepen and sharpen them.

Symbolic functions differ from those of nonsymbolic events in the ways in which causal relationships must be traced in the two realms. Physical causation exists outside and independently of consciousness. Trees do not grow and chemicals do not react on purpose, although human purposes may intervene or cause them to function. When a sequence of physical events is set in motion, we have only partial awareness and little control over the entire chain of its consequences.

The symbolic world, however, is totally invented. Nothing happens in it independently of man's will, although much that happens may again escape individual awareness or scrutiny. The reasons that things exist in the symbolic world, and the ways in which things are related to one another and to their symbolic consequences, as in a play or story, are completely artificial. That does not make their production any more arbitrary or whimsical than the events of the physical world. But it means that the laws of the symbolic world are entirely socially and culturally determined. A character in fiction dies not because he has lived but because it serves a purpose to have him die. Intended or not, that purpose is the only reality of the story. The causal link is not between life and death but between a creator's or producing organization's position in life and society and the significance of that death. No T.V. badman ever dies a natural death, nor can the hero of a western serial be cut down in the prime of life. To be true to life in fiction would falsify the deeper truth of cultural and social values served by symbolic functions.

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Whatever exists in the symbolic world is there because someone put it there. The reason may be deliberate and planned, or circumstantial, such as an unrelated marketing or programming decision, or a vague feeling that it will improve the story. Having been put there, things not only stand for other things as all symbols do, but also *do* something in their symbolic context. The introduction (or elimination) of a character, a scene, an event, has functional consequences. It changes other things in the story. It makes the whole work "work" differently. Dynamic symbol systems are not maps of some other "real" territory. They are our mythology, our organs of social meaning. They make visible some conceptions of the invisible forces of life and society. We select and shape them to bend otherwise elusive facts to our (not always conscious) purposes. Whether we know it or intend it or not, purposes are inherent in the way things actually work out in the symbolic world. Even when men and institutions lie, they cannot do so without giving off signs of the purposes of their lying, at least in the long run; otherwise why lie? More problems arise from communicating hidden purposes than from failing to communicate at all.

How things work out in mass-produced symbolic systems, as in all collective myths, celebrations and rituals, is indicative of institutional interests and pressures. Various power roles within and without the institution enter into the decision-making process that prescribes, selects and shapes the final product. In the creation of news, facts impose some constraints upon invention; the burden of serving institutional purposes is placed upon selection, treatment, context and display. Fiction and drama carry no presumption of facticity and thus do not inhibit at all the candid expression of social values. On the contrary, they give free reign to adjusting facts to the truth of institutional purpose. Fiction can thus perform social symbolic functions more directly than can other forms of discourse.

That is why in fiction and drama there is no need to moralize. The moral is usually in the facts themselves. For example, if a social inferior (lower-class, "native," black, et cetera) usurps the place of a superior (through marriage, business deal, combat,

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et cetera), he or she can have an unfortunate accident, thus avoiding overt bias and yet performing the symbolic function of enhancing the superior life chances of "superior" characters. Violence in the mass media—unlike life—is usually among strangers, permitting the lessons of social power (what types stand to win or lose in a conflict) to emerge unhindered by close human ties. Fiction can act out purposes by presenting a world in which things seem to work out as they "ought to," regrettable or even terrible as that might be made to appear.

Characters come to life in the symbolic world of mass culture to perform functions of genuine social import. These functions need not be planned or perceived *as such*. They need not even conform to any overt rationalizations or moralizing. The functions are implicit not in what producers and audiences think they "know," but in what they assimilate of what the characters of the symbolic world in fact *are* and *do*.

The Hidden Curriculum and Its Effects

The facts of life in the symbolic world form patterns that I call the "hidden curriculum." It is the framework that makes the notion of "effects" sensible as those changes that can be observed within a stable structure. The *prior* preoccupation with "effects" is misleading, however. It only betrays greater concern with marketing tactics than with the basic allocation of values in our society. The post World War II movement within social science reflected more concern with buying or voting behavior than with the meanings that govern *all* behavior. Now social scientists are taking another look at the relationships between social structures and those general frameworks of knowledge and values that in turn shape the meanings and determine the efficacy of particular messages. As humanists have always known, no society designs its religions, or its customs, or its schools on the basis of a comparative assessment of the effects of various factual or philosophical statements. That would put the cart of tactics before the horse of basic aims and functions. Any assessment of effects must assume the existence of a standard of measurement against

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which different or changing quantities and qualities can be measured. That standard is implicit in the value structure of a culture. Should that be immune from inquiry? The contention that the existence or meaning of an action or communication should not be assessed until its effects are established is tantamount to the assertion that the structure of a culture should not be investigated; only its tactics are to be subjected to scientific inquiry. Far from being scientific, this is itself a symbolic tactic attempting to define what is scientifically reasonable and respectable in a way that serves only the most dominant, pervasive and taken-for-granted social interests.

The hidden curriculum is a lesson plan that no one teaches but everyone learns. It consists of the symbolic contours of the social order. One cannot sensibly ask what its effects are any more than one can ask about the effects of being born Chinese rather than American. Culture-power is the ability to define the rules of the game of life that most members of a society will take for granted. That some will reject and others will come to oppose some of the rules, or the game itself, is obvious and may on occasion be important. But the most important thing to know is the nature and structure of the representations that most people will assume to be normal and inevitable. Having established some features of the hidden curriculum, one can then ask how its specific lessons are internalized and which of its functions serve what purposes.

Every culture, as any school, will organize knowledge into patterns that cultivate a social order. The fundamental lessons of the curriculum are not just what pupils learn in math, history or physics, et cetera, but also the fact that *those* are its commonly required subjects, and not basketweaving, harmony or Marxism-Leninism (except where *that* is required). One cannot ask about the effects of that pattern of required learnings except by comparing it with the functional dynamics of other patterns. The structures themselves and most of their symbolic functions are inevitably assimilated if there is to be anything like a relatively stable social order. Culture *is* that system of messages that makes human society possible. After grasping the implicit agenda of

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discourse, scale of priorities, spectrum of valuations and clusters of associations that most members of a culture come to assume as the overall framework for most of their thinking and behavior, we can begin to observe the fluctuations and reversals within that structure. Only after that can we ask the "effects" question.

The question of effects, properly phrased, inquires first into individual and group selectivities by dipping into the currents and crosscurrents of the cultural stream. Secondly, "effects" research can investigate the contributions that particular types of messages make to the processing of particular conceptions within given frameworks of values and knowledge. We are a long way from being able to answer the second question. The answer will be of strategic significance once we know more of what the game is about.

The prior need is to examine the framework implicit in the hidden curriculum. We must first go beneath the explicit and fragmented significance of individual images available to casual personal scrutiny, and find the symbolic patterns and functions that entertain (in every sense of that word) the collective morality and the dominant sensibilities of the social order.

The image of schools and scholars is that part of the hidden curriculum in which all members of society learn about learning itself. Its symbolic functions relate images of learning, and of the formal institutions of learning, to basic human values and to the locus of power in society. I think that the figure of the schoolteacher is a central symbol of the uses and control of popular knowledge. Its most telling features touch upon questions of vitality and self-direction, social relations, morality and power.

Historical Images

When he is not the Ichabod Crane of literature (scared out of town by the virile males of the community, with a pumpkin smashed over his head), the typical teacher in American novels is "stooped, gaunt, and gray with weariness. His suit has the shine of shabby gentility and hangs loose from his undernourished frame" (Arthur Foff, in "The Teacher as Hero," *Readings in*

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Education). That is, until class is out and memory rings the school bell when we say a tearful "Good Morning Miss Dove," or bid a nostalgic "Goodbye Mr. Chips."

In his study of the college professor in the novel, Michael Belok noted that American fiction uses teaching to "unsex a woman." Even being a teacher's wife may be unenviable. Theodore Dreiser characterized Donald Moranville Strunk, A.B., Ph.D., Professor of History, as having had "one of the homeliest women for a wife I ever saw." College students responding to a 1960 survey by Donald O'Dowd and David Beardsley, characterized the schoolteacher as a person "who cannot even command an attractive wife." Love eludes even the attractive, eager "Our Miss Brooks" and the owlish, but smart, "Mr. Peepers"; sex degrades the neurotic, fascist Miss Brodie and destroys Professor Rath of *The Blue Angel.*

For Americans, the prestigious title "professor" resounds with mock deference. *The Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia,* 1899, gave as one definition of a professor ". . . any one who publicly teaches or exercises an art or occupation for pay, as dancing-master, phrenologist, balloonist, juggler, acrobat, boxer, etc." From there it was not too far to the piano player in a brothel, or as Henry L. Mencken euphemistically recorded in *The American Language,* "a house musician." In time the usage mellowed to permit any prominent orchestra leader to be called "professor," as those who remember Kay Kyser will recall. Recent media fare is replete with such phenomena as the movie *The Nutty Professor,* T.V.'s "Professor Backward," the cartoon "Professor Wimple's Crossword Zoo," and Pat Paulsen's "Laugh-In" professor.

Belok could find only about two hundred novels since 1900 in which college professors appeared as characters. Major American novelists, wrote John Lyons, in *The College Novel in America,* either have avoided the academy or have written novels that are basically anti-intellectual. An English review of the American scene observed, however, that the college novel is now a "cottage industry." "And so it seems," commented Charles Shapiro, noting the entry of writers into the universities, "as book after book assaults us with tales of assorted hypocrisies committed

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under the name of higher education" (*Saturday Review,* October 19, 1963).

Hofstadter has also observed that the American teacher has not become an important national figure, worthy of emulation. Historical reasons may partly account for the fact that the scholar, as Dixon Wecter also noted in his *The Hero in America,* "has never kindled the American imagination."

Until the industrial and national revolutions that changed the map of Europe, teachers were likely to be recruited from among the misfits of society. When the common schools were established in Russia, the theological seminaries dumped their "undesirables" to be the teachers. In the Prussia of Frederick the Great, it was the army that disposed of its invalids by appointing them schoolmasters.

> The low opinion of the rank-and-file schoolmaster in Europe spread to the New World, and a seventeenth-century Rector of Annapolis recorded that on the arrival of every ship containing bondservants or convicts, schoolmasters were offered for sale but that they did not fetch as good prices as weavers, tailors, and other tradesman (Alma S. Wittlin).

The national revolutions of Europe had a popular cultural character. Many of the leaders were writers and poets rising through the ranks of the intellectuals closest to the people, the teachers. W. G. Cove, the British teacher, strike leader, union president and member of Parliament, once wrote that "At the head of every continental revolutionary movement, or near the head of it, stands an ex-teacher."

Until perhaps the emergence of the black liberation movement which, for reasons peculiar to American culture, seemed to propel clergymen rather than teachers into leadership, there has been no comparable historical force to add a heroic dimension to the traditional image of the American teacher. The forced pace of industrialization in the nineteenth century and the consequent pressure for extending public education created the monitorial schools, according to Wittlin, "to fit the early state of industrial civilization."

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Pupils were cheaply mass produced, down to $1 per year. The scholars, who first learned their lessons from the teacher, conveyed exactly the same lesson to other children, ten to a monitor. . . . In 1916 a book appeared in Boston on *Public School Administration,* by E. P. Cubberley, in which it was stated that ". . . the schools are, in a sense, factories in which the raw materials are to be shaped into products to meet the various demands of life." According to this philosophy the educator was allotted the modest role of the copyist of patterns.

During the next fifty years, the cultural forces that shape the common images of society became largely mechanized, centralized and commercialized. Teacher-power emerged as an organized force, and education became a political battleground. But the social function of the teacher image in the new culture remained the traditional one: to cultivate mistrust of the intellect on the loose.

Teacher and School in United States Media

There are 2.5 million teachers in the public schools in the United States. They range from 22 to over 65 years of age, and come from all states, classes, religions and ethnic groups. Of course, they have some characteristics as a group: they average 39 years of age, 12 years of professional experience, and about $9,000 a year. Two out of every three are women. Teaching is the largest profession; its members run the gamut of human types.

But not in popular fiction and drama. The raw facts of life are not the truth of social and institutional purpose. Frequency of symbolic representation is not the reflection of census figures. The casting of the symbolic world has a message of its own.

Studies of occupational representation among mass media characters, celebrities, and even movie titles, agree that teachers, the largest profession in life, rank among the smallest in the media world. About two to three percent of all identifiable professional references or characterizations go to media teachers. Classifying occupational roles for the *American Sociological Review,* Lois and Melvin DeFleur found the same number of educators as taxi, truck and bus drivers in the televised labor force.

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Most of the literary studies delineate a teacher image created for elite audiences. Except when mellowed by misty memories of childhood, it is generally cruel and unsympathetic, as if in revenge for the intellectual and social pretensions of the hired hand. Much of that image found its way into the mass media, somewhat relieved by the populist fantasy of the good, if not too enviable, teacher.

Studies of media images were conducted by a group of researchers at the University of Illinois; the work is continuing at the University of Pennsylvania. For a number of years, our focus was the portrayal of teachers, students and schools in the mass media. Some studies dealt with one medium, like Jack Schwartz's study of Hollywood movies and Roger Brown's study of magazine fiction; others ranged more widely. The United States Office of Education supported my analysis of over fourteen hundred feature films, television and radio plays, and popular magazine stories featuring twenty-eight hundred leading characters in the mass media of ten countries. The National Science Foundation, UNESCO, and the International Sociological Association jointly sponsored a study that I did of the film hero involving one year's feature film production in six countries. I will draw on the reports of these and other studies to piece together some basis for reflecting upon the symbolic functions and social role of the image of the teacher in mass culture.

Schwartz's study of Hollywood movies found that the presence of a teacher tips the odds three to one in favor of the movie being a comedy. Mass media teachers, creatures of private industry depicting public agents, suffer from signs of a cultural power conflict in which the media have the upper hand. The study's comprehensive review of research concludes:

> Teachers in books, drama, magazine cartoons, and films were depicted as tyrannical, brutal, pedantic, dull, awkward, queer, and depressed. The few attractive teachers remained in the profession only long enough to find a mate. Teachers had a difficult time getting and staying married. One investigator noted that two-thirds of the teachers were portrayed as emotionally maladjusted. Another writer noted that

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"to succeed as a teacher one must fail as a man or woman."

Love and the Teacher

Love and sex are dramatic symbols of vitality and power. How a profession fares in love in the mass media is a good measure of its symbolic stature.

The mass media teacher pays a price for professional success. The price is impotence, and worse. The "schoolmarm" image hits women especially hard. Love and marriage are women's chief media specialities and typical reasons for existing in the stories at all.

Female characters in the world of mass fiction and drama are limited to a narrow range of parts; that is why media males not only dominate media females (except in the home, where males *prefer* to be incompetent), but also vastly outnumber them. The average ratio is four men for every woman, but the proportion varies by theme. Love, marriage and bringing up children are themes that utilize women characters in parts that do not require special explanation.

Studies of school-related stories in all media found both women teachers and love playing prominent parts—but rarely together. Almost half of all media teachers are women; this is a high female ratio for the media, but still lower than the two-thirds of all real-life teachers who are women. The school stories are more likely to feature romance than are stories in general. But the romance rarely involves the teacher, and least of all the woman teacher. Typical is Miss Dove, who is so devoted, so selfless, so excruciatingly *good,* that she passes up her opportunity to marry in order to pay back the $11,430 her dead father had "borrowed" from the bank where he worked.

Nearly half of all media adults, but only twenty-six percent of male teachers and no more than eighteen percent of female teachers, are married. Despite all the romance and happy endings in the stories, teachers rarely inspire love or fall in love, especially with each other. The most common condition of love is that the teacher find a partner outside education. The typical pattern has

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her quitting a New England high school and a biology teacher fiancé to "find herself" and a *man* in New York. Or it has him leaving a dull musical chair at a Western college, along with a straitlaced professor girl friend, to be taught something about music and love in Tin Pan Alley.

Failure in love and defeat in life permit most media teachers to be fully dedicated to the profession. The media teacher leaving for another specific occupation knows the road to success in the media world. Five times out of six the road leads to show business.

Poverty of the Schools

In the film study, 25 of the 470 movies portraying some aspect of education were found to show the financial plight of the schools. The deficiencies are usually in extracurricular activities such as entertainment and sports. There is never a need for more teachers or laboratories or classrooms. Profits from sports events, successful musical shows and unexpected bequests of the rich are the usual solutions to academic poverty. Only two films show schools to be public responsibilities, publicly financed. One deals with support for West Point, and the other depicts the building of a school in a remote New Zealand village.

Only one film shows the financial problem as one of low salaries for teachers. A wealthy Texas rancher is shocked to find his son trying to raise a family on the meager salary of an instructor. He secretly negotiates with a local butcher to sell his son meat at half price. He also tries to prevent his son's promotion, confident that he will return to the ranch. When he does not, the father solves the problem by donating enough money to the school to provide a pay increase for all teachers.

An analysis of teacher characters in *Saturday Evening Post* fiction found them in more frequent financial pickles. This was usually explained by showing that they strive less than the other characters. About one-third of the magazine's teachers solve their financial problems by quitting the profession. No teacher is ever given a salary raise. No student is supported on a public scholarship. No community takes the initiative to raise taxes or to build

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or improve the schools. When there is a suggestion of improvement in the poverty of the schools it is likely to be a private solution, such as finding a rich donor or holding a fantastically successful show or sports event.

The School Sports Story

Alan Booth, in "Sex and Social Participation," describes school sports as an arena of "early male socialization." Extensive friendship ties are linked to participation in games. The winning team is also a symbol of an institution's ability to attract talent and display power. Winning scores have been found to relate to legislative appropriations and certainly to alumni giving. An article in the *Philadelphia Magazine* (May, 1972) quotes the head of the alumni society as saying that "The alumnus in Oregon or Texas is going to read about Penn's basketball team in his home town paper, not some professor's finding old ruins in England."

There is no doubt that the most frequent appearance of schools and colleges in the American press is on the sports page. The magic words of American higher education are Ivy League and Big Ten. *Saturday Evening Post* readers loved the stories of George Fitch. The first of these, published in 1908, began:

> Yes, sir, it's been seven years now since old Siwash College has been beaten in football. . . . We've shut out Hopkinsville seven times—pushed them off the field, off the earth, into the hospitals and into the discard. We've beaten six State universities by an average of seven touchdowns, two goal kicks, a rib, three jawbones and four new kinds of yells. We put such a crimp into old Muggledorfer that her Faculty suddenly decided that football developed the toes and teeth at the expense of the intellect and they took up intercollegiate beanbags instead. And in all those seven years we've never really been scared but once . . . .

The school sports story, with its violent terminology, strong group spirit, and concern over the rules of the game, is the most likely vehicle for community enthusiasm, teamwork and the mixing of different classes and races in a common cause. It generally demonstrates the ethics of skill and power among those who

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achieve equal status. (This can be contrasted with the symbolic functions of the crime or spy story displaying the game of power among those of unequal status or those who do not play by the same rules.)

The film study shows sports to be the central theme in twice as many movies as deal with study, science or research, and to depict virtues never seen in a portrayal of scholarly activity. The school sports story serves its symbolic functions in three ways: (1) as the means by which youths from different walks of life find acceptance in the group; (2) as the chief symbolic unifier of students, faculty, parents and alumni, and (3) as teaching the importance of passing a realistic test of social and ethical "maturity."

The largest single group, nearly one-third of all films of school sports, concentrates on the third, the socio-ethical lesson. They warn that romantic illusions lead to cynicism and despair. They council realism and vigilance lest alien ideologies take advantage of and subvert "our" flexible rules for "their" purposes. "The most common presentation of sports," reported Schwartz, "was that it was a much less glamorous and honest activity than student-players were at first led to believe."

> For the sake of victory, schools were shown to sacrifice their honor by depending upon extra-collegiate sources for both personnel and financial support. This dependence upon outside sources was not portrayed as unethical in all films dealing with sports—in fact, several films portrayed this dependence in a vein of lighthearted comedy which, if not condoning the practice, did not take the unethical aspects of the situation seriously. However, in the films to seriously treat the unethical practices of the sport and their demoralizing consequences for students, the portrayal of school sports was likened to a *rites de passage*. Sports were shown as analogous to the battleground upon which a young initiate experienced teamwork and struggle, despair and disillusionment, victory and defeat.

The typical school sports story is a morality play that shows a sort of pragmatic "democracy in action." The rules will bend within reason, and anyone can play, as long as the game is just a game and the prime source of power is clearly understood. Abuse the rules and the tone changes. In a group of films, gangsters

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try to manipulate players and even faculty to reap large gambling profits. In another, radicals "disguised as students" (described in a contemporary *New York Times* review as "namby-pamby, bushy haired, and wearing tortoise-shell glasses") plan to overthrow capitalism, beginning with the college football team. The local hero falls briefly under their spell, but recovers in time to win the game of the year and the respect of normal healthy Americans.

Community and Power

When they cannot relate to "the game," in which students play the lead, teachers usually do not "belong" at all. Typically presented as alien to the community in which they live and work, and often in conflict with its values, teachers may be seen as well meaning and kindly if impotent, or dangerous and evil if powerful, but rarely both good *and* effective.

Studies by Claude C. Bowman, Richard C. Boys and Roland A. Springer trace community conflict and antagonism through fifty years of magazine publishing, general fiction and Broadway drama. Brown's study of *Saturday Evening Post* fiction found that teachers "act differently" even when trying to conform. The film research concluded that all but six of the twenty-eight films touching upon relations between school and community portray a teacher as the target of hostility, ridicule or ostracism. Schwartz found that the offending teachers are usually shown as "outsiders . . . with their own set of values often aiding in isolating them from the community."

Nonconformist media teachers usually come to see the error of their ways. One movie depicts a socialistically inclined economics professor striking it rich. He changes his mind about radical causes and returns to his job a millionaire.

Most instances of unreconciled conflict between teachers and community involve the cardinal sins of trying to change society rather than the schools (usually labeled "communism") or of finding a source of wisdom outside the approved community context (usually represented as "atheism"). Sex often appears as

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a malignant obsession when sought by such unlikely characters as teachers. A cynically explicit portrayal in a 1937 movie shows a Southern mob lynching a "yankee" teacher convicted of assaulting an attractive student. The district attorney does not believe the teacher guilt, but prosecutes vigorously because of the political value of the case for his own career.

In casting about for occupations to delineate hero types who are both right and mighty, mass media authors rarely pick teaching. Dallas Smythe's analysis of television drama found teachers outstanding among all T.V. occupations in being the "cleanest" and the "kindest." But they were also rated the "weakest," the "softest" and the "slowest."

The more potent teacher risks turning into that symbol of evil intellect—the mass media scientist. On television, the scientist was rated as the most "deceitful," "cruel" and "unfair" of all professional types.

Personality ratings used to assess students' images of real-life teachers tapped mass-cultural stereotypes. O'Dowd and Beardsley found that the student image of the schoolteacher is that of an unselfish, uninteresting, unsuccessful and effeminate person. The scientist, on the other hand, presents the image of the cool, cruel, hard-driving intellectual and often a loner who cannot be trusted.

Similarly, Joseph Gusfield and Michael Schwartz concluded in their 1963 article for the *American Sociological Review*, that the teacher image presents "the sharpest contrast between elements of esteem and status, on the one hand, and those of power and income on the other." The teacher ranks as the most "honest" and second most "useful" of fifteen occupations, and also the "weakest" and "lightest." The scientist again appears to be cool, tough and antisocial as well as "irreligious" and "foreign."

Publish AND Perish

It is not surprising that the dramatic uses of scholarship and research contrast sharply with those portraying sports and other entertainment. Academic research leads to murder in nearly half of the twenty-five films found to portray teachers conducting it. Film

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teachers invent poisons, revive prehistoric monsters or train other creatures to do away with suspected enemies. One famous movie of the 1950s shows a psychology professor hypnotizing gorillas to murder the girls who reject his advances. The typical plot has some obsession drive the demented intellect to invent an instrument that gets out of control and destroys its maker, to the relief of all mankind.

In a group of nine films dealing with research, the experimenting teacher or professor falls victim to his own delusions and exposes the stupidity or hypocrisy of scholarship. Typical is the movie in which the professor of Egyptology incorrectly deciphers an ancient tablet and the false message sends him on a series of comic adventures.

Research and experimentation fare better in the hands of amateurs. Student scholarship is usually foolish but never evil or selfish. Incidentally, classroom scenes hardly ever exhibit learning or scholarship. They are used to display problems of authority and discipline.

The teacher struggling for discipline in the school is often brutal and sadistic. In films of more recent vintage, students (as if representing the avenging forces of society) strike back in kind. The "class struggle" is one in which the teacher rarely comes out on top.

Images Across Cultures

Through a series of cross-cultural comparative studies we have tried to understand our own images better by comparing them with those of others. Four countries of Western Europe and five countries of Eastern Europe (including the Soviet Union) provided our comparisons. A plot sketch from each country's sample will give something of the flavor of the material:

"Red Castle" is what townspeople call the new headquarters of the Teachers' Recreation Center. It was a baron's palace before the revolution. A priceless collection of jewels is still stored in the Castle. One day a precious stone is missing. The shadow of suspicion falls on Professor Zach, a frequent visitor at "Red Castle." But the clever deductions of his students (turned amateur detectives) vindicate the

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Professor, and the real culprits are caught. (Czechoslovakia)

Word gets around that the attractive new teacher is carrying on with the well-known high school jock. And in the locker room, too. She is nearly ruined before it develops that the student, himself the victim of a psychopathic, scandal-mongering father, only tried to rape her in an unguarded moment. (United States)

The tactlessness of a dry and dogmatic school director drives one of the students of the elementary school of Borsk into the clutches of a religious sect. The teachers' collective is dismayed. A timid young instructor is drawn into the struggle against the sect. Emboldened through her efforts to demonstrate that religious dogmatism defeats the goals of free education, she realizes the great role of the teacher in public life. (Russia)

The humane methods of the new teacher in an East End slum school lead to disaster. "Spare the rod . . ." gloat the hardened old disciplinarians. The teacher is about to give up and leave when a glimmer of student response at the end of the term gives him second thoughts. (England)

The impoverished peasants of a village refuse to work for starvation wages on the Count's estate. But the gendarmes have a firm grip on this treasonous activity. The peasants are ordered to the railroad station to welcome the arriving Count. They come. But they come to pay respects to the departing teacher who is being run out of town as the chief troublemaker. (Hungary)

A utopian idealist teaching in a lycée becomes so involved in his pacifist schemes that he neglects his family. Reality finally deals him a tragic but sobering blow: his daughter has a lover, has taken part in a robbery, and is about to run away. (France)

Orphaned, hungry and demoralized, a gang of boys terrorizes the countryside at the end of the war. A former partisan leader, now teacher, turns them into useful citizens. (Poland)

Teacher Goals and Fates

We found that the Russian and other socialist media teachers are depicted as more "learned," "democratic" and "manly" than those of the West. Eastern mass media stories of schools and teachers stress the ideals of service to community and nation more than three times as frequently as United States and other Western media.

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United States media portray a higher proportion of women teachers on all levels of education than do the media of other countries. Our media also depict a composite image of the teacher as less professional and less likely either to advance or to slip on the social ladder than the media teacher of other countries. The United States media teacher is more easily frustrated and victimized by the much higher level of violence and illegality prevalent in her world than is the media teacher of the other countries.

Teachers are quitting the profession in about twenty-eight percent of United States and Western and fourteen percent of Eastern media stories. The main reasons for giving up teaching in Western media are the frustrations and conflicts of the job, and marriage. Eastern media teachers leaving the field of education are most likely to be fired, retired at the end of their service or advanced to positions of higher leadership.

Teachers stand out everywhere in seeking intellectual values more often than do the other adult characters in the same fictional environment. But Eastern European media characters, and especially teachers, are different from those of other countries in their much more frequent pursuit of goals of social morality (justice, honor, public service, a better world).

We analyzed the barriers that stand in the way of achievement and found that the one major difference between the problems of United States media teaches and those of the other countries lies in the teachers themselves. Only in United States media are teachers more likely than other adults to be depicted as handicapped by their own weaknesses and fears.

The fears may be justified. Over one-third of all United States media teachers commit violence and nearly half fall victim to it. This is low by United States media standards, but it is roughly twice the mayhem found in Western media and about six times that found in the media world of education in Eastern Europe.

A happy ending is symbolic insistence that justice triumphs despite all troubles. American media stories are the most insistent. Conditions of success, however, are more indicative of its functions than frequency alone. We compared the goals of unambiguously successful characters with those who clearly fail.

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Only in American media are successful teachers depicted as less likely to pursue aims of social morality than are teachers marked for failure. Many United States media teachers who do tackle social goals are naïve, comic and even mad, and most are crushed by some misfortune fictional fate throws in their paths.

The Role of Students

Being a student is a long and varied stage in life. The range of opportunities for portrayal is great. The institutional and social forces that shape the representation of teachers in the mass media also affect the depiction of students. But the potential diversity of the student image leads to extraordinary differences in scope and function.

American mass media are unique in not earmarking significant resources to young people. They treat children as a low-income, high-profit, quick-turnover market where the message of social power (police, violence) can be sold in its cheapest and crudest forms. As if to underline the analogy to the slum, the trade journals call the children's program segment on television the "kidvid ghetto."

Market considerations also account for the fact that children and youth (as well as old people) in leading roles make the product a "specialty story." They presumably fragment audience appeal and need special exploitation. American youths become universally employable for dramatic purposes (as in life) when they *leave* school.

An international study of the "film hero," which I wrote for *Journalism Monographs,* classified students as an occupational group. Entertainers head the list of occupations, with eighteen percent of all leading characters. Students are next to the last with four percent. (The last were laborers.) The Western European pattern is similar, although students are more numerous than in United States films.

The films of Eastern Europe offer striking contrast. Students are in *first* place on the same list of occupations, with percentages ranging from twenty percent in Poland to twenty-four percent in

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Yugoslavia, and twenty-eight percent of all leading characters in Czechoslovakia.

The diversity of the portrayals permits few generalizations. Focus on childhood and adolescence in American media requires specialized story values. They are often found outside the regular social context. Several stories are about mentally ill, retarded and physically handicapped youngsters. One revolves around a little boy "playing Cupid." Another deals with a sadistic teenage gang leader. A sociology student's research requires her to pose as a prostitute. Youngsters complicate life for attractive widowed fathers or mothers. A hard boiled manager of a gambling house finds himself the guardian of a six-year-old orphan. A good-hearted mute befriends a homeless prostitute and her little daughter. Six homeless waifs camp out in an unused shack on the Connecticut estate where a glamorous but exhausted star seeks peace and quiet.

Students in the media of Eastern Europe are not only more numerous but also move in the thematic and moral mainstream of their symbolic world. This is a world in which a mountain youth pressed into hard labor by the lord of the manor joins the outlaws to fight injustice—as his father had done before him. A crippled and lonely student finds amusement in shooting birds from his wheelchair, until he downs a homing pigeon awaited by a little girl and her fishermen friends, and begins the slow, painful road to recovery for both the pigeon and himself. Three boys on a school outing steal away into the woods and come upon a partisan hideout; their teacher demands an explanation for their absence, but he is the local commander of the native fascist militia! A theft of puppets from the school theater sends a group of youngsters on a wild chase involving an unpopular boy who plays detective, unaware that his schoolmates suspect *him* of the crime. A schoolgirl's vacation love affair, her first, sets her on a course of competition and conflict with her attractive aunt. A school boy longing for a bicycle stumbles upon lost money—and discovers the difficulty of making a moral choice. A group of classmates decide to expose the hypocrisy and stealing going on at their collective farm—but what to do when they find some of their own parents among the culprits? A student poses as a German sympathizer in order to obtain infor-

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mation for the Resistance; the antifascist patriots are out to kill him, but his mission demands that he maintain silence. A young pupil is falsely accused of having stolen his classmate's pencil, and confesses to escape the ridicule of his accusers—only to make matters worse.

In these stories, school is often the center of social and moral struggle. Behind the authority of the teacher stands the power of the state. Analysts rated the media schools of Eastern Europe as "related to real life," and learning as "of immediate benefit" about twice as frequently as in the media schools of the West. Eastern European media students are shown as "interested in knowledge," as "leaders and organizers" and as "participating in community affairs" from two to three times as often as those of the West. Eastern European media students are depicted as taking examinations three times as frequently as United States media students, but the latter were observed "dominating classroom activity" four times as frequently as the former.

Knowledge and Its Control

An episode of the television serial "Wild Wild West" features a geology professor who, imbued with noble if (naturally) impractical ideas, goes West in the employ of a rich prospector in order to alleviate his own genteel poverty. But the prospector lets him down. Feeling betrayed (with some justification), he becomes obsessed with thoughts of revenge. His knowledge, now out of control of an employer, becomes a menace to society. He plots to destroy the state through a series of earthquakes triggered by dynamite blasts at critical points in the fault line he mapped through the area. "I have turned the tide," he cries, "employed nature for my own use —now I want my reward." Brawny agent West and his brainy sidekick (!) make sure that he gets it. We last see him scrawling equations on a chalkboard as he holds "class" alone in his jail cell.

All societies suspect what they need but cannot fully control. Symbolizing such uneasy symbiotic relationships are ambivalent images of oracles, eccentrics, witches, alchemists and others "possessed" of independent knowledge, as well as teachers. The teacher

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image is likely also to fall short of the mandarin ideal or to suffer from the human tendency to denigrate "outgrown" authority.

Beyond such similarities, however, differences in mass-mediated symbolic functions reveal and cultivate significant social distinctions. As we go from West to East, teachers stand out in their own fictional environments as more distinguished in learning and in qualities of personal and social morality. The terms of this morality are not necessarily comparable across cultures. The ethic of individualistic liberalism is not the same as that of socialist morality or the Soviet concept of "the moral development of the child," even if some of the same terms are used. Nevertheless, the image of the teacher in the socialist media reflects a happier fate and more stable, purposeful and socially meaningful existence in its own fictional world than it does in the West.

Differences in social organization account for some of these distinctions. Mass media are cultural organs of industrial society. Their ownership, management and clientele—extending the institutional order into the cultural sphere—shape their outlook and functions. The organizational and client relationships of Eastern European media interlock with other public institutions, including the schools, the party and the state itself. The hidden curriculum serves the same institutional interests as the overt one; both are agencies of planned social transformation. This places media images of schools, scholars and the knowledge they symbolize, in the mainstream of the symbolic world undergoing a cultural revolution. In performing their symbolic functions, socialist media can take advantage of their legacy of intellectual leadership in nationalist and proletarian movements in which teachers have had a prominent place for centuries.

Organizational and client relationships of American media also reward development of a particular selection from prevalent cultural patterns. The selection manifests the dual character of private enterprise views on public enterprise. On the one hand, schools are a necessary cost factor whose value is limited to its direct usefulness to the investment in current products, practices and outlooks. On the other hand, schools represent political capital and popular aspirations for mobility, equality and social reform. The

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concept of knowledge and its role in and control by society are caught in the cross fire. The most enduring and pervasive images of teachers in American mass culture are those that humiliate and depress them. Failure in love and impotence in life permit them to be "good." Or they can be vigorous but evil, or perhaps only ridiculous.

Poverty is normal and probably desirable for a dependent institution that should not develop a strong power base of its own. When cut loose from corporate, military, law-enforcement or other established power, even the miracles of science turn into "mad scientist" horrors.

No school or culture educates children for some other society. Giving teachers a messianic mission and having schools soak up all the dreams and aspirations citizens have for their children doom the enterprise to failure. No social order can afford to make good such a promise. The illusion itself contains the seeds of the noble-but-impractical image. It becomes only reasonable and realistic to show teachers full of goodness, but sapped of vitality and power. Turn on the power and the impotent figure becomes a monster, only confirming the doubts and suspicions inherent in the ambivalent image.

Unlike the army and the police, the schools do not appear to be a major public responsibility at all. They are shown as places of controversy and conflict, except when the goal is winning for "the team." The school sports story provides a dramatic framework for learning the rules of order and life in a community dedicated to skills directly applicable to competitive power.

American media scholars symbolize the promise of learning on behalf of noble and idealistic goals, and undercut that promise by being strange, weak and foolish, and generally unworthy of the support of the community. The "hidden curriculum" cultivates the illusion of social reform through education and, at the same time, helps pave the way for the perennial collapse of its achievement. As things work out in the symbolic realm, the bankruptcy of the schools is their own fault. The invidious distinction between teaching and doing is maintained. The promise of a productive society to place the cultivation of a distinctly human self-conscious-

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ness highest on its scale of priorities is again betrayed.

American media are cultural arms of private enterprise in the public sphere. The images they project have a dual character. They attempt to be serviceable (or at least not inimical) to the commercial and other interests of private enterprise and, at the same time, represent those public ideals that give them universal attraction, currency and credibility. That is why the study of capitalist mass media and their symbolic functions presents a particularly complex and challenging task. The task is to discover the actual laws of symbolic behavior in a field of conflicting institutional interests, and to assess their real contributions to the cultivation of human conceptions and social policy.

I doubt that the nature of education, the role of knowledge and the prospect for real changes in school policy can be fully grasped until that assessment is well under way. New developments in communication technology have the potential of altering social patterns of knowledge, as did the old developments. The question is whether they will merely extend even further the scope and reach of the existing structures, or begin to change them. That, of course, is not a technological but an institutional question. Institutions use technology in communications and culture for their own purposes. The image of the schoolteacher in the hidden curriculum of the mass media may continue to be a useful indicator of those purposes.

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Imagine the Present

WILLIAM JOVANOVICH

HISTORY IS, OF COURSE, what you make of it. When I was at the university in the late 1930s, the popular historians held that the story of America was properly told in the terms of compromise and conciliation. Our native genius, they presumed, was to settle an issue and then move forward to the next one, making progress, as it were, by means of a democratic dialectic. At that time we believed that the major contentions in American history—if one could get past the almost overwhelming exceptions of the Civil War and the expropriation of the Indians—had been conciliated by a bargaining between economic, regional, and social interests. The new lot of historians does not accept this. They tell the American story in the terms of interdiction and confrontation. They hold that we have as a nation settled little, that the great national issues have less often been resolved than postponed, and that a reckoning lies ahead. It is obvious that many Americans, the young particularly, are not assured by their country's history. We look to the past not to find there what we gained, but what we lost. Perhaps this is not so singular; perhaps it is universal. Every man is a traveler from another time, and if the journey is long he ends as a stranger. Myself, I begin to recall America now and to seek out its monuments and ruins. I recognize the past, but I have to imagine the present.

History ought to be written as fairly as possible, we can agree, if for no other reason than the good ends of art and scholarship. I hesitate to go further. One hears often the aphorism of George Santayana that "those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." It is a pretty statement but it says less, I think, than first appears. The danger is not that we shall fall into

✪ WILLIAM JOVANOVICH, a member of the Editorial Board of the SCHOLAR, is chairman and chief executive officer of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.
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error by neglecting history; instead, the danger is that we shall use history to excuse a continuing error. This we know cruelly from the accounts of the Indochina war.

No good comes of getting the past wrong on purpose. One ought to be careful not to turn recollections into political proofs. I once thought that liberals are less reliable than conservatives in this respect—probably because they are more tolerant of Marxists, who cannot abide the untidiness of history and keep rewriting it in support of their theory. But now I am not so sure. It seems to me that conservative politicians waste our attention, and embarrass themselves, by calling upon the public to cherish the presumably benign society of their childhood years. President Nixon mistakes his audience in this way. His recounting of his own past has the effect of making his sophisticated listeners intolerant, and his tolerant listeners uneasy. Yet what he recounts is to be believed, surely. It really was like that: his family's plain Quaker teaching, his father's diligent but unsuccessful effort at storekeeping, his admiration for team sports in school, his maturing respect for the correctness of the written law. I am familiar with that kind of personal history, as are millions of others. But is there any point in Mr. Nixon's telling it? He will not persuade the poor by telling them of his simple beginnings: the poor are notorious for admiring the rich, in this century the Roosevelts and the Kennedys. Nor will he persuade the powerful, for we all know that when times are tough Wall Street and State Street abandon rugged individualism in favor of public spending.

Why then does Mr. Nixon persist in trying to reclaim that old, gone, lost America of his childhood years? Maybe he does it because he, like so many of us, cannot be freed from the habit of repeating the essentially literary notion of the American Dream, or the American Promise. Something, the dream unrealized, perhaps, the promise unfulfilled, makes us restive about the past and uncertain of the future. In America both the liberals and the conservatives feel cheated—but not by each other. Political complicity is not our style, and we do not credit it much; for that reason, in part, the extreme right and the extreme left have no standing here. Neither the fascists nor the communists have been

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able to convince us with their favorite argument, which is that the people need to be guarded against conspiracies. Such a theory of history is not acceptable to American liberals or conservatives. If they feel cheated, it is for different reasons.

Liberals often strike me as people who are always surprised. They are surprised that things turn out badly for the most part, and that the generality of men is not more reliable than the particular man. They are quick to romanticize the personality of one leader, and just as quick to repugn and savage another. Liberals are dismayed, and rightly, that we have made too little of the opportunity we found on this vast and open continent. Conservatives, on the other hand, tend to mistake the notion of self-prejudice for that of self-interest, which is to say that they wrongly expect that a man's opinion of himself is in the main determined by his pay and property. The conservative finds it hard to accept the fact that most people act together politically because they hold a common attitude, rather than a common interest. And like the liberal, he is dismayed by the current state of affairs. Both of them are inclined to think that the citizenry used to behave better even if it lived worse.

The fact is that most people did behave better, if by that we mean that they were more compliant to public convention and more restrained in the ordinary presence of civil authority. No sensible purpose is gained by denying this, however one may explain it. I grew up in a downtown district where the streets were fairly clean; the inhabitants were poor but not careless, and the city's sweepers were underpaid but not scornful. I went to public schools in which discipline was more prized than was expressiveness, and the result in the students was a reliable if rather deadened demeanor. The people in my neighborhood knew that the police were often unfair but always powerful, and they feared to be accused of crime or even disorderliness. Mainly, however, they regarded crime as being both humiliating and unproductive, and no way to success. I think it is true to say, without entering into sociological analysis, that the dominant mode in American life at that time was generality as distinguished from particularity, with more regard for publicity than for privacy. The government was

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thought to serve the Constitutional purpose to "insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare." Liberty as a concept was more communal than individual, more a tent than an umbrella.

All that has changed, so immediately changed that what we do now cannot be comprehended in the traditional terms of political liberalism and conservatism. The turbulence of living in the United States today is described by Milovan Djilas, the Yugoslav dissenter, as "the madness of liberty." If it is not madness, then it is a terrible riskiness. What we seem to be doing is testing to the furthest limit the public safety against an individual's safety, and, in the effort, risking both. It might be allowed that such a chance can be taken by a new nation, or by one that has lost a war or suffered a revolution, but not by the oldest republic on earth. Nothing confirms more the radicalism of these times in the United States than the spread of anti-Americanism around the world. Leftists and rightists both fear the unknown course, and the unknown consequence, of our political fundamentalism.

The new American radicalism has not yet been contained within the bounds of party politics. All that we can say of it, perhaps, is that it attempts a number of things. As citizens we seek to secure for every person his civil rights without breaching his privacy. This is a complicated procedure when put into practice, and it leads to absurdity in daily affairs, such as school busing, which makes commuters out of children before their time. As citizens we seek also to tolerate and to safeguard various acts of civil disobedience without at the same time allowing civil disorder. On the whole, this can be said to work: certainly the anti-war demonstrations have had an effect on military policy. And as citizens we seek, in a manner and to a degree that has never before been tried, to protect the individual against official or bureaucratic harassment. The results here are mixed. As robbery and vice become harder to patrol and to prosecute, they become more usual and maybe more profitable. (In New York City, the chance of one's being sent to prison for a felonious act is about one in two hundred.) Supporting people by welfare has freed millions of the lower classes from the fright of poverty, but it is corrupting, too.

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Crime and cheating on the dole are a kind of carelessness. All classes in our society are less inhibited than they were a generation ago. Indeed, the new American radicalism (unlike the Marxist movements) has no trace of puritanism in it.

What we attempt in the United States, and the extent of the risks we run, can be described by a number of grand declarations, each of which seems to carry its own contradiction and irony.

We are the only power that is trying to educate its entire population. (Jean-François Revel notes that in France there are fewer college students among fifty million Frenchmen than among twenty-two million American blacks; and that the United Nations does not give statistics on the French library system because it is so meager.) To educate the whole citizenry is a staggering concept, especially in a nation in which schooling is still controlled and financed locally. Yet, as we undertake the final stage toward its fulfillment, we are about to defeat its means, which is the public school system. The irony is that as we set about achieving a universal education we lose confidence in the methods of mass education, which now embrace, among other things, unionized teachers, a graded curriculum that allows no-fail and no-fault instruction, and open-enrollment universities.

We alone, among nations, are addressing ourselves to the issue of racism on a massive scale. The American blacks are unique: they form a huge minority—larger than five-sixths of the populations represented in the United Nations—that has no separate national or linguistic or religious identification. The American blacks are simply not like other minorities in other countries. They are not like Koreans in Japan, or Jews in the Soviet Union, or Pakistanis in Britain. They are themselves only, *and they are we.* The American must deal inescapably with the question of racism —inescapably in the way that the Chinese would have to deal with it if there were eighty-five million whites, a minority of eleven percent, in China today. Yet the American dilemma is not to be seen as an accident of history, for it was caused in part by a contradiction of the nation's political genius and idealism. We are the inheritors of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, and so believe that "Governments are instituted among Men,

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deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." The terrible irony is that whereas all those Americans who were first, settlers and, later, immigrants, did choose to come to this land and did consent to their own governance, the black and the Indian neither made this choice nor gave this consent, for the black was enslaved and the Indian was disenfranchised. The American black and the American Indian have not yet entered into a social contract with the American state. Until they do, and until they can, they will remain alienated and aggrieved.

Americans are the only people in modern history who have popularly and effectively declared themselves against a major war that is being fought by their own soldiers, and fought successfully by the usual definition of military success. How wondrous this is: from such a circumstance, in another place, one would expect nothing less drastic than a revolt or civil war. What did happen was the growth of a unique radical movement, comprised mainly of students, that was able to force from office a national administration and to alter the country's balance of political affairs. There is no use in looking through a lexicon of Marxist politics to find the source of the radicalism in the antiwar movement. It will not be found there. The movement coalesced because its members held a common attitude toward a commonsense matter of life and death. It was pragmatical, and in that respect not unlike the labor movement of the 1930s, or the farmer movement of the 1890s. The radical youth movement was not, in any event, based on fixed intellectual positions, and it has all but disappeared at present for the practical reason that it seemed to win its main objective. Quite unlike the Europeans, we have managed to credit intellectual people with influence without making of them a social class.

There is, in all this, an irony. It would seem that in the United States, if you win, you lose. Popular movements cannot persist, apparently, if the attraction of organizing and taking action is greater than the attraction of a political theory. A popular movement tends to lose its center—and spin off its adherents—once it gains its first objectives. In America the lack of dogma is, in effect, liberating: it frees a man of somebody else's enthusiasm, or impatience. These, then, are some of the grand declarations that I

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think are determining the course of America now. These are the declarations of our good intent. We can all see that things are changing. Do they change for the better or for the worse? I am inclined to be optimistic, but I forget on what account. Optimism is a native trait: Americans are given to reminiscing about the future. They do it at shareholder meetings, at political conventions, and at university commencements. This I can do also, on occasion, but I confess that I find it harder and harder to do well. The years go by, and a man begins to recognize the past.

No good comes of getting the past wrong, or of investing it with a false sentiment. The America I recall was in large part a hard and lonely land. I saw an Edward Hopper painting the other day, a gaunt Victorian house with staring window eyes. As a boy I saw a place like that once in southwestern Nebraska, a house standing alone beside a railroad track. When I look at a Walker Evans photograph, I recall walking by streets like the ones he depicts, with storefronts as blank as stage sets, down along the Gulf Coast near Galveston. I reread F. Scott Fitzgerald and catch sight again of the most typical scene, the college boys changing trains at Chicago, on their way east to look for a lost enchantment. I watch *Winterset* on the "Late Show" and once more I hear the newsboys on Arapahoe Street in Denver, calling out that Sacco and Vanzetti are dead. I recognize all that, and my heart aches for America. But there's nothing for it, because that America is gone, gone forever, and what remains is its art and its exiles.

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POEMS

W. S. MERWIN

A Number

Those who come back from a number
are paler
they know that they're
one number the less
and whenever they talk
they talk about where they were
for each of their words has been there

and all the time they were gone
that number was here
not a day passed
without its turning up somewhere
well where then were those

who went out over unlit hills
bearing their words
to that number
and turned pale at what they saw
and keep talking about it

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The Palace

Music does not happen in a place
in it leaves do not grow
even if you try to put them there
there is nothing to see and nobody knows you
even if you were born there

yet the blood continues to follow music
the heart never sleeps urging the feet of the blood
to echo to rest nowhere
to pass near the skin to listen
whether music is anywhere
to look through a glass to go on
to go through
music never waits the heart says

the blood says nothing
the deaf queen pacing alone
through her thin palace
feeling music turning in the walls

✪ W. S. MERWIN's most recent books are *The Carrier of Ladders* and *The Miner's Pale Children*. He is working with Clarence Brown on a book of translations of the poems of Ossip Mandelstam.

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The Future of Nonmetropolitan America

MARION CLAWSON

NONMETROPOLITAN AMERICA faces an uncertain and unpromising future. If the vast rural areas, small towns, and small cities of this country are to be revitalized, they need more attention than they have had and they need some new approaches as well.

For centuries, a distinction has been drawn between the city resident and the farmer or country dweller. The cities have generally been in the lead for cultural, philosophic, scientific, technological, and other advances. To those who loved them, they were the epitome of all that was great and good in man; the farmers were country bumpkins, ignorant as well as unlearned, mere clods. At the same time, there has been a strong streak of anticity feeling—the cities were wicked, places of disease and crime, evil in their thoughts and actions. The cities have attracted both the able and the deviant from the rural areas, each of whom saw in the city greater opportunities for his talents and his desires than the country could offer. In the United States, the line between "urban" and "rural" was long drawn between cities of twenty-five hundred or more, and smaller hamlets and open country.

The old rural-urban dichotomy is no longer useful. Many people who live in the open country are merely suburbanites, living just a little farther out, dependent upon the city for their employment, and urban in every important aspect of their life-styles. Many farmers are college graduates, often widely trav-

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eled, as well dressed and as articulate as the college professor or researcher whom they consult about some technical aspect of their farm operations. On the other hand, many big city residents, especially many ghetto dwellers, have come from farms and rural areas during their adult lifetimes, still carrying many of the attitudes and even the scars of early farm upbringing. The city slicker is no slicker than his country cousin, and the big city man may be no better educated.

The useful distinction today is between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan. A metropolitan area, in American statistical, economic, and social terms, includes at least one city of fifty thousand or more, together with satellite suburbs and smaller cities, and together with economically closely integrated countryside. The tests by which such integration is measured get rather detailed and technical, and need not concern us here. We may simply note that metropolitan area boundaries typically follow county boundaries, and hence at times may include a lot of rural countryside. Nonmetropolitan areas are, quite simply, everything that is not metropolitan.

In 1970, there were 243 metropolitan areas in the United States, with 139 million people, or 68 percent of the national population. The nonmetropolitan areas thus contained about a third of the people, but included perhaps 90 percent of the total land area. Many of these people lived in small cities of less than 50 thousand; some lived in small towns, ranging downward to the smallest hamlets; and some lived in the open country, on farms in some but not all cases. Thus, the nonmetropolitan areas are important nationally, in terms of their population; they are more important in some regions than these national figures suggest, because there are few or no metropolitan areas in such regions. And their social or political importance is still greater, for many of our older political and social leaders came from such backgrounds, and their present attitudes are largely conditioned by their nonmetropolitan origins.

Since 1940, when metropolitan areas were first distinguished in census reports and other statistical sources, by far the greater part of the national population increase has been in metropolitan

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areas. As far as total population has been concerned, the nonmetropolitan areas have been relatively stagnant. A few of the largest cities in the nonmetropolitan class have grown past the fifty thousand mark, thus becoming metropolitan areas themselves in the past thirty years or less; comparisons between decade populations are thus not always simple or direct. Ignoring such statistical discrepancies, however, we see that metropolitan areas have grown by fifty-six percent since 1950, and that nonmetropolitan areas have grown by only five percent.

A closer look at the nonmetropolitan areas clearly reveals a pattern of population decline for most of them. More than a fourth of all counties in the United States lost population in each of the decades of the 1940s, the 1950s, and the 1960s; some of them had lost in one or several earlier decades as well. In addition, many other counties have lost population in some recent decades.

Rural areas have traditionally had relatively high birthrates; some young people have traditionally migrated to the cities in search of better jobs and a different life-style. For many decades in the United States, this farm-city migration siphoned off part of the natural increase in farm and rural areas. Migration has always been disproportionately a characteristic of young men and women; not yet established in an economic sense and not yet having deep social and personal roots in the rural areas, they can move and have moved more readily than their elders.

But since World War II, the migration rate has increased to the point where actual declines in local population have become far more common. In a great many counties, especially in the heartland of the United States, maximum population was reached before World War I; steady though sometimes small declines have taken place in ensuing decades. In about a tenth of the counties, the out-movement of young people has gone so far that those remaining do not produce enough babies annually, although their birthrates are about average, to offset the numbers of older persons dying each year. An excess of deaths over births is a new phenomenon in American history.

A population decline, especially a persistent one, has marked

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economic and social effects upon a county, city or community. It is, first of all, dramatic evidence of the area's lack of competitive economic and social strength; the young people, born and raised in the community, prefer to leave it, to work and live elsewhere for the rest of their lives. No judgments by outsiders, as to the relative attractiveness or lack of it, can be half as significant as this action by the young people. They vote with their feet as they leave an area, often when they graduate from high school. The psychological attitude underlying this migration, affecting not only those who leave but many of those who stay behind, is perhaps the most serious aspect of population loss. The home community stands convicted of second-place (or worse) attractiveness; often those who stay are dispirited by the migration of friends.

But this population decline due to migration can be measured in colder but perhaps more objective terms. In a group of Iowa "steady loser" counties, which had lost in all the last three decades and in at least five decades since 1880, the median age of the population was greater, the median amount of schooling was less, the median family income was far less, and even housing conditions were poorer, than in a group of nearby counties that had gained in population in every decade. A similar analysis for groups of Illinois counties shows similar contrasts. The statistical inference is clear enough: that it is the younger and better-educated young people who move; their incomes are higher and their living conditions are better as a result of the move.

The same situation can be analyzed, from the available statistics, in another way. If states are arrayed according to the percentage of their population located in metropolitan areas, and compared according to their average income per capita, a fairly close relationship is apparent. In the South, an additional ten percent of population in metropolitan areas is associated with an increase of about 125 dollars in average per capita income; elsewhere the increase in per capita income associated with the same increase in metropolitan population is somewhat less—about 90 dollars. One must be careful about asserting causation;

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correlation measures association, not causation. The question is: Are some states richer because more people live in metropolitan areas? Or do more people live in metropolitan areas because their states are richer? One suspects the former.

One further bit of evidence may be cited. The number of rural poor in the United States is about equal to the number of urban poor; but since urban population is more than double rural population, the poverty rate in rural areas is double that in urban areas. (This analysis, unfortunately for our present purpose, uses the old urban-rural dichotomy, not the metropolitan-nonmetropolitan one that we employ here; but an analysis that follows the latter line would be likely to show similar results.) The rural poor are more easily overlooked than the urban poor; scattered and often isolated, they are far less able to band together, to make their needs known, and to demand remedial action.

Heavy migration from an area, leading to actual reduction in local population, is a cumulative process. That is, as able young workers leave, the remaining labor force is less attractive to possible new industry or other employment; and this in turn means fewer new jobs. As some young people leave, those who remain are less able to create and continue social activities attractive to young people, and this in turn makes the areas less attractive, so that more young people decide to migrate. As the number of young people declines, the opportunities for finding the right marriage partner decline. Each of these, and other results of heavy migration, in turn become reasons for still more migration.

Barring some new and more effective program to aid nonmetropolitan areas, the long-term trend in nonmetropolitan areas is not favorable. As a matter of fact, the migrations thus far have been far more serious than their mere numbers would suggest. The losses have been dominantly young people, as we have noted; this means that those who remain are older, on the average. Some small towns now are almost "old folks' homes"; sometimes a farmer has sold out to a neighbor anxious to enlarge his operations, and has moved to the local small town where many of his friends live. Although this is natural and perhaps

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desirable, such small towns often lack the kind of medical facilities that an aging population needs. The apparent maintenance in population numbers is deceptive; as these older people die off, in another decade or two, the decline in population is likely to be swifter. And as populations decline, so do business and social institutions.

Many observers of the American scene have noted the situation described in the foregoing pages, although I think there has been a tendency to underestimate greatly the scope and seriousness of the past population decline. Many persons who have noted the present situation have been hesitant to make the projections that I make; but to me, the portent of recent trends is fairly clear.

Concern over the present unhappy state of nonmetropolitan America has been considerable. Many persons have deplored the stagnation and relative decline of the smaller cities; there has been a feeling that the growth of large cities was in itself undesirable and even unhealthy. A number of persons in public life have advocated some program of national action to aid the ailing nonmetropolitan areas.

Most programs advocated or undertaken can be described fairly, I think, as "prop-up" approaches. Faced with an evident lack of vigor in the nonmetropolitan areas, such programs as federal loans or grants for sewers, water supply systems, and other public works have sought to bolster, without basically changing, the nonmetropolitan economies. Programs of federal assistance are an old and tested method of aid to regions whose economies are lagging. But such programs are far from universally successful. Federal subsidy is advantageous to some local interests, even when the national gain is less than the national cost; but the subsidy may fail to achieve its own stated objective.

In the case of nonmetropolitan America, I am convinced that something more fundamental than "propping up" is required. I think that a basic restructuring of the pattern of human settlement on the land is required. The nonmetropolitan society and economy would be more viable if the population were substantially regrouped into a degree of agglomeration. If there were

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far fewer but larger towns—one of fifty thousand instead of ten of five thousand each, or one of twenty thousand instead of ten of two thousand each, and so on—these towns could have greater economic and social strength. They could provide a place to live and ways to make a living that would be more attractive, to the young people in particular, than are the present towns.

I see no reason why a substantial proportion of farmers need live on their farms at all. As a matter of fact, one farmer in eight lives in town now; but as many as half probably could do so. Farmers can live in town and commute to work as well, and as far, as farmers living on their farms can commute to town for a job. On modern roads, farmers could commute forty miles in forty-five to fifty minutes—a time cost no worse than many large city residents incur. Many farms do not require a labor input every day; hence commuting could be lessened. If more farmers lived in town—and not just in a local village, but in a more substantial town—and if the small-town populations were grouped, then substantially larger cities, although often still of nonmetropolitan scale, would result.

This suggestion for population agglomeration at the lower end of the density range assumes that there are substantial advantages, both economic and social, in the larger towns that would result. Schools, health facilities, recreation and social activities of all kinds could be richer, as well as more efficient. Job opportunities should be greater; stores could offer more variety, better quality merchandise and more competition. A small city of twenty-five thousand could never offer what one of two hundred fifty thousand can provide; but it can offer vastly more than does a town of twenty-five hundred.

I have in mind an ultimate physical regrouping of people—actual moves of residences. But this might well be preceded by some functional restructuring. If several small counties and small towns were to adopt a single government, and to work directly toward an integrated set of public services, private employment and trading facilities, then physical regrouping could take place over a period of years. If new facilities, whether public service, private business, or residential, were all concentrated in the

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planned core, then time and obsolescence would gradually shift people to that core.

Americans traditionally have been free to live where they chose (and could afford), but their movements and locations have been much influenced by public policies of many kinds. I do not envisage compelling rural and small-town people to concentrate in larger (although still relatively small) cities. But I think the consequences of the present settlement pattern should be traced forthrightly, even starkly, and the opportunity for something different and better should be offered.

This type of population regrouping could be aided by federal and state technical assistance and direct subsidy. The initiative would have to come from the local areas, but the moving costs could be borne by the whole nation. In the United States we long ago embarked on aid to agriculture and on a social security program for the incapacitated and the elderly, and in more recent years we have adopted numerous programs to aid the lower-income inner city. I argue that we should extend meaningful and useful aid to our extensive nonmetropolitan areas, to help their residents do what they cannot well do for themselves.

My suggestion is for minor surgery on nonmetropolitan America; the alternative, I believe, is decay. Minor surgery in time might reduce the amount of surgery needed. No one suggests that it will be easy, but I think that, in the long run, it might be less painful than the continued stagnation and decay now evident.

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PART TWO

New Concepts in the Evolution of Complexity

J. BRONOWSKI

EVOLUTION IS CRUCIAL to any discussion of biology, because this and only this makes biology a different kind of subject from physics. A recent survey by Desmond Bernal of what is known about biological molecules begins with a chapter on "The Nature of Biology," and he opens it with a section whose title bluntly asks, "Does Biology Exist?" The question is meant to remind us abruptly that biology is a different kind of study from other sciences, because it studies a very specialized and, as it were, accidental phenomenon. Bernal puts the distinction precisely:

> I believe there is a radical difference, fundamentally a philosophical difference, between biology and the so-called exact or inorganic sciences, particularly physics. In the latter we postulate elementary particles which are necessary to the structure of the universe and that the laws controlling their movements and transformations are intrinsically necessary and in general hold over the whole universe.
>
> Biology, however, deals with descriptions and ordering of very special parts of the universe which we call life—even more particularly in these days, terrestrial life. It is primarily a descriptive science, more like geography, dealing with the structure and working of a number of peculiarly organized entities, at a particular moment of time on a particular planet.

Perhaps Bernal is too narrow when he compares biology with

✪ The first installment of JACOB BRONOWSKI's "New Concepts in the Evolution of Complexity" appeared in the Autumn, 1972, issue of the SCHOLAR.

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geography, which is mainly a description of space. The comparison that comes to my mind is rather with geology, which, like biology, deals with configurations in space and traces their behavior in time. But essentially the distinction that he makes is well grounded; life has a more accidental and local character than the other phenomena of the physical world.

I would go further, and say that life has a more *open and unbounded* character than the other phenomena of the physical world: it is incomplete and unfinished in a way that they are not. That is, biology has a different character from physics at every point in evolutionary time. The biological universe that we are discussing today is different from that which we could have discussed three million years ago—when indeed there was no Homo sapiens to discuss it. And we must expect that the biological universe of three million years hence may be quite as different again.

Let me make this distinction explicitly. The development of life from one form to another is unlike that of the rest of the physical world, because it is triggered by accidents, and they give each new form its unique character. Life is not an orderly continuum like the growing of a crystal; it creates new expressions, and remains constantly open to them, as a succession of errors which can only occur *because life is accident-prone.* The nature of life is only expressed in its perpetual evolution, which is another name for the succession (and the success) of its errors.

The molecules that make up a cell or an individual form a physical system with many states. If we map all possible states (disorderly as well as orderly) by the points of an abstract space, there is a narrow sequence of points which maps the sequence of steps in the life cycle of the cell, or the sequence of states of the individual before he returns to (approximately) the same state—say, waking in the morning. Since the cycle of states returns on itself, the sequence of points forms (virtually) a closed loop. Thus, on the scale of the cell and of the individual, life is a process which is topologically closed. It runs over more or less the same loop again and again, and in time it runs down.

Yet life does not run down in the way in which natural processes run down, by the general leveling of energy peaks which

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is called the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The death of a cell or of an individual is not a leveling out, a falling apart of the architecture, as decay after death is. Instead, death is a failure of the metabolism to continue its cycles, and it begins in a failure to repeat the cycles accurately. It seems likely that the cell or individual is clogged by errors which are inevitable and become cumulative: whatever the underlying cause proves to be, the topological loop wavers and comes to a stop.

But life as an evolutionary sequence is not a closed loop. On the contrary, life as evolution is topologically open, for it has no cycle in time. Yet it derives this openness from just such accidents or errors, at least in kind, as kill the individual. The mechanism of survival for a species is its evolution, and evolution is that quantum resonator or multiplier, the exploitation of an accident to create a new and unique form, for which Max Delbrück was looking when he came into biology.

In summary, the closed loop of an individual life and the open path of evolution are dual aspects of life. The common mainspring of quantum accidents (that is, of errors in the copying of biological molecules) may be responsible for individual death, and is certainly responsible for evolution. Both are only properly understood when they are put side by side as complementary parts or processes of life.

I will make this distinction in another form by examining the different arguments for vitalism which have been advanced by Michael Polanyi, first at the level of the cell, and then at the level of evolution. At the first or lower level, Polanyi simply says that to explain the *machinery* of a cell is like explaining the machinery of a watch while missing the most important thing about it, which is that a watch is planned *for a purpose*—to tell the time.

The design of a watch is the classical illustration for God's design in man that deists introduced in the eighteenth century. Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, and William Paley in the *Evidences of Christianity,* used it to claim that man is a more ingenious machine than is a watch, and must therefore have been designed by a more ingenious creator. Polanyi now gives this argu-

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ment a new look by saying that just as the design of the watch points to and is only understood in its purpose, so the design of the machinery of life points to and is only understood at a higher level of explanation by purpose. He calls this the boundary conditions for any mechanism, but these words only restate the requirement which he proposes, namely that it must fit into and serve some overall plan outside itself. In essence, the argument remains in the eighteenth century: we *know* that the watch is ingenious because we know the purpose for which it is planned.

Perhaps it is easiest to see what is wrong with this argument by deriving a paradox from it, as follows. The argument is intended to show that man (and any other living form) is not simply a machine. In order to show this, he is compared with a typical machine, namely a watch; and it is concluded that he is more sophisticated, namely more purposeful, than the mechanism that drives the watch. How is this concluded? By showing that the watch itself, as a machine, is more sophisticated, namely more purposeful, than the mechanism that drives it. In short, even a machine is not merely a mechanism, or what we usually call a machine. Man therefore is not a machine because he is a machine, and it has already been shown that a machine is not a machine.

How does this paradox come about? Evidently, by confusing the *external function* for which the machine has been made (by the watchmaker, for example) with the *inner plan* which the living creature follows as its natural and species-specific sequence of operations. To claim that this inner plan means anything more can only be justified by appealing to a quite abstract, classical tenet of philosophy, that the reduction of a sequence to its parts is not a sufficient explanation of their totality. But the implication is out of place here, where it merely restates the analogy of the watch which is designed to tell the time. There are indeed contexts in philosophy in which reductionism is not enough. But reductionism is valid and sufficient when it is an *historical* explanation, so that it presents a temporal and logical sequence of steps by which the result has been reached. (Indeed, all causal explanations are of this kind, and can only be challenged if we challenge the first cause.) To reduce a whole to its parts is a valid exposition of its

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plan if in fact the parts have come together in time, step by step, in building up a sequence of lesser wholes. So it is valid to regard an organism as an historical creation whose plan is explained by its evolution. But the plan of life in this sense is *unbounded.* Only unbounded plans can be creative; and evolution is such a plan, which has created what is radically new in life, the dynamic of time.

So it is timely now to consider *evolution as an open and unbounded plan,* and to ask what additional principles are needed to make it capable of creating the new living forms that we know. For it is essential that we recognize these forms as genuine creations, which have not been formed on a bounded plan like that which runs its rigid course from the seed to the full-grown plant.

The distinction here is between a sequence of actions that is fixed in advance by the end state that it must reach, and a train of events that is open and unbounded to the future because its specific outcome is not foreseen. *Any bounded plan is in essence the solution to a problem,* and life as a mechanism has this character. By contrast, the sequence of events that constitutes an unbounded plan is invented moment by moment from what has gone before, and the outcome is not solved but created. Life as an evolution is a creation of this kind.

In this analysis, the vitalist's question becomes directed to a different issue: the relation between the direction of evolution and the direction of time. In a history of three thousand million years, evolution has not run backward—at least, by and large, and in a definable statistical sense, it has not run backward. (The existence of some lines of regression, such as those which have produced the viruses, does not change this general characterization.) Why is this? Why does evolution not run at random hither and thither in time? What is the screw that moves it forward, or at least, what is the ratchet that keeps it from slipping back? Is it possible to have such a mechanism that is not planned? What is the relation that ties evolution to the arrow of time, and makes it a barbed arrow?

The paradox to be resolved here is classical in science: how can disorder on the small scale be consonant with order on the large scale, in time or in space. If this question is asked of the mole-

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cules in a stream of gas, the answer is easy—the motion imposed on the stream swamps the random motions of the individual molecules. But this picture will not help to explain evolution, because there is no imposed motion there. On the contrary, if we were to assume an imposed motion, we would be accepting the postulate of vitalism. Evolution must have a different statistical form, in which there is *an inherent potential for large-scale order to act as a sieve* or selector on the individual chance events. There are such cooperative phenomena in physics: for example, in the structure of crystals, which we understand, and perhaps in the structure of liquids, which we do not. The existence of a potential of order in the selection of chance events is clear, but what is never clear in advance is how it will express itself. It is here that we need two additional principles in evolution to give it a natural order in time.

There are five distinct principles that make up the concept of evolution, as I interpret it. They are: (a) family descent, (b) natural selection, (c) Mendelian inheritance, (d) fitness for change, and (e) stratified stability.

The first three are familiar, and I need not elaborate them; they make up the standard account of the mechanism of evolution that has been accepted since R. A. Fisher first formalized it in *The Genetical Theory of Natural Selection.*

But in my view, it is now necessary to add the two further principles that I propose, namely (d) fitness for change, and (e) stratified stability.

They are concerned, the one with the *variability* of living forms, and the other with their *stability;* and between them they explain how it comes about that biological evolution has a direction in time—and has a direction in the same sense as time. The direction of evolution is an important and indeed crucial phenomenon, which singles it out among statistical processes. For in so far as statistical processes have a direction at all, it is usually a movement toward the average—and that is exactly what evolution is *not.*

Of the two new principles that I propose, the first is only periph-

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eral to my theme here, and I shall deal with it quite briefly. In order that a species shall be capable of changing to fit its environment tomorrow, it must maintain its *fitness for change* today. The dormant genes that may be promoted tomorrow when they become useful must be preserved today when they are useless. And for this they must be held now in a setting of other genes which makes it possible to promote them rapidly. If this is to be done in the present, without some mysterious plan for the future, it must be by *natural selection* not for this or that variant but *for variability itself.*

It is evident that there is natural selection in favor of genetic variability. The selection is made by the small changes, up and down and up again and down again, by which the environment flutters about its mean. A long-term trend in the environment which lasts a hundred generations or so will in that time select a new adaptation. But the short-term fluctuation which goes one way for a few generations and then the other way for a few genera-erations will meanwhile select for adaptability. That is, the short-term fluctuation favors the establishment of an arrangement of genes that will help mutant genes to express themselves.

Indeed, we know now that there are single genes that function specifically to enhance variability. For example, there are single genes that increase the rate of mutation in several other genes at the same time. Their action could explain the tendency for genetic change in one part of an organism (particularly, and in the first place, a haploid organism) to keep pace with change in other parts. A master gene of this kind, which increases mutation, is a mechanism that opens up the future, not by foreseeing it but by promoting the capacity for change.

I turn now to the crucial part of my argument. It is evident that we cannot discuss the variability of organisms and species without also examining their stability. We have therefore also to trace a mechanism for stability, as the second of the two balanced mechanisms that are needed to complete our understanding of evolution. I call this, the fifth and last principle in my analysis of evolution, the concept of *stratified stability*.

Evolution is commonly presented, even now, as if it required

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nothing but natural selection to explain its action, one minute step after another, as it were gene by gene. But an organism is an integrated system, and that implies that its coordination is easily disturbed. This is true of every gene: normal or mutant, it has to be incorporated into the ordered totality of the gene complex like a piece in a jigsaw puzzle.

Yet the analogy of the jigsaw is too rigid: we need a geometrical model of stability in living processes (and in the structures that carry them out) which is not so land-locked against change. Moreover, the model must express the way in which the more complex forms of life arise from the simpler forms, and arise later in time. *This is the model of stratified stability.*

There are evolutionary processes in nature that do not demand the intervention of selective forces. Characteristic is the evolution of the chemical elements, which are built up in different stars step by step, first hydrogen to helium, then helium to carbon, and on to heavier elements. The encounter of hydrogen nuclei makes helium simply (although indirectly) because they hold together: arrangements are briefly formed which in time form the more complex configuration that is helium. Each helium nucleus is a new unit which is stable, and can therefore be used as a new raw material to build up still higher elements.

The most telling example is the creation of carbon from helium. Two helium nuclei which collide do not make a stable element, and fly apart again in less than a millionth of a millionth of a second. But if in that splinter of time a third helium nucleus runs into the pair, it binds them together and makes a stable triad which is a nucleus of carbon. Every carbon atom in every organic molecule in every cell in every living creature has been formed by such a wildly improbable triple collision in a star.

Here then is a physical model which shows how simple units come together to make more complex configurations; how these configurations, if they are stable, serve as units to make higher configurations; and how these higher configurations again, provided they are stable, serve as units to build still more complex ones, and so on. Ultimately a heavy atom such as iron, and perhaps even a complex molecule containing iron (such as hemoglobin),

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simply fixes and expresses the potential of stability that lay hidden in the primitive building blocks of cosmic hydrogen.

The sequence of building up stratified stability is also clear in living forms. Atoms build the four base molecules, thymine and adenine, cytosine and guanine, which are very stable configurations. The bases are built into the nucleic acids, which are remarkably stable in their turn. And the genes are stable structures formed from the nucleic acids, and so on to the sub-units of a protein, to the proteins themselves, to the enzymes, and step by step to the complete cell. The cell is so stable as a topological structure in space and time that it can live as a self-contained unit. Still the cells in their turn build up the different organs which appear as stable structures in the higher organisms, arranged in different and more and more complex forms.

Two special conditions have assisted this mode of climbing from simple to complex. First, of course, there is the energy that comes to us from the sun, which increases the number of encounters between simple units and helps to lift them over the next energy barrier above them. (In the same way, simple atomic nuclei encounter one another reasonably often, and are lifted over the next energy barrier above them, by the energy in hot stars.) And second, natural selection speeds up the establishment of each new stratum of stability in the forms of life.

The stratification of stability is fundamental in living systems, and it explains why evolution has a consistent direction in time. Single mutations are errors at random, and have no fixed direction in time, as we know from experiments. And natural selection does not carry or impose a direction in time either. But the building up of stable configurations does have a direction, the more complex stratum built on the next lower, which cannot be reversed in general (although there can be particular lines of regression, such as the viruses and other parasites which exploit the more complex biological machinery of their hosts). Here is the barb that evolution gives to time: it does not make it go forward, but it prevents it from running backward. The back mutations that occur cannot reverse it in general, because they do not fit into the level of stability that the system has reached: even though they might offer an in-

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dividual advantage to natural selection, they damage the organization of the system as a whole and make it unstable. Because stability is stratified, evolution is open, and necessarily creates more and more complex forms.

There is therefore a peculiar irony in the vitalist claim that *the progress of evolution from simple to complex* cannot be the work of chance. On the contrary, as we see, exactly this *is how chance works, and is constrained to work by its nature.* The total potential of stability that is hidden in matter can only be evoked in steps, each higher layer resting on the layer below it. The stable units that compose one layer are the raw material for random encounters which will produce higher configurations, some of which will chance to be stable. So long as there remains a potential of stability that has not become actual, there is no other way for chance to go. It is as if nature were shuffling a sticky pack of cards, and it is not surprising that they hold together in longer and longer runs.

It is often said that the progression from simple to complex runs counter to the normal statistics of chance that are formalized in the Second Law of Thermodynamics. Strictly speaking, we could avoid this criticism simply by insisting that the Second Law does not apply to living systems in the environment in which we find them. For the Second Law applies only when there is no overall flow of energy into or out of a system, whereas all living systems are sustained by a net inflow of energy.

But although this reply has a formal finality, in my view it evades the underlying question that is being asked. True, life could not have evolved in the absence of a steady stream of energy from the sun—a kind of energy wind on the earth. But if there were no more to the mechanism of molecular evolution than this, we should still be at a loss to understand how *more and more complex* molecules came to establish themselves. All that the energy wind can do, in itself, is to increase the range and frequency of variation around the average state: that is, to stimulate the *formation* of more complex molecular arrangements. But most of these variant arrangements fall back to the norm almost at once,

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by the usual thermodynamic processes of degradation; so that it remains to be explained why they do not all do so, and how instead some complex arrangements *establish* themselves, and become the base for further complexity in their turn.

It is therefore relevant to discuss the Second Law, which is usually interpreted to mean that all constituent parts of a system must fall progressively to their simplest states. But this interpretation quite misunderstands the character of statistical laws in general in nonequilibrium states. The Second Law describes the final equilibrium state of a system; if we are to apply it, as here, to stable states which are far from equilibrium, we must interpret and formulate it differently. *In these conditions, the Second Law of Thermodynamics becomes a physical law only if there is added to it the condition that there are no preferred states or configurations.* In itself, the Second Law merely enumerates all the configurations that a system could take up, and it remarks that the largest number in this count are average or featureless. Therefore if there are no preferred configurations (that is, no hidden stabilities in the system on the way to equilibrium) we must expect that any special feature that we find is exceptional and temporary, and will revert to the average in the long run. This is *a true theorem in combinatorial arithmetic,* and (like other statistical laws) *a fair guess at the behavior of long runs.* But it tells us little about the natural world which, in the years since the Second Law seemed exciting, has turned out to be full of preferred configurations and hidden stabilities, even at the most basic and inanimate level of atomic structure.

The Second Law describes the statistics of a system around equilibrium whose configurations are all equal, and it makes the obvious remark that chance can only make such a system fluctuate around its average. There are no stable states in such a system, and there is therefore no stratum that can establish itself; the system stays around its average only by a principle of indifference, because numerically the most configurations are bunched around the average.

But if there are hidden relations in the system on the way to equilibrium which cause some configurations to be stable, the sta-

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tistics are changed. The preferred configurations may be unimaginably rare; nevertheless, they present another level around which the system can bunch, and there is now a counter-current or tug-of-war within the system between this level and the average. Since the average has no inherent stability, the preferred stable configuration will capture members of the system often enough to change the distribution; and in the end, the system will be established at this level as a new average. In this way, local systems of a fair size can climb up from one level of stability to the next, even though the configuration at the higher level is rare. When the higher level becomes the new average, the climb is repeated to the next higher level of stability; and so on up the ladder of strata.

So, contrary to what is usually said, the Second Law of Thermodynamics does not fix an arrow in time by its statistics alone. Some empirical condition must be added to it before it can describe time (or anything else) in the real world, where our view is finite.

When there are hidden strata of stability, one above another, as there are in our universe, it follows that the direction of time is given by the evolutionary process that climbs them one by one. Indeed, if this were not so, it would be impossible to conceive how the features that we remark could have arisen. We should have to posit a miraculous beginning to time at which the features (and we among them) were created ready-made, and left to fall apart ever since into a tohubohu of individual particles.

Time in the large, open time, takes its direction from the evolutionary processes that mark and scale it. So it is pointless to ask why evolution has a fixed direction in time, and to draw conclusions from the speculation. It is evolution, physical and biological, that gives time its direction; and no mystical explanation is required where there is nothing to explain. The progression from simple to complex, the building up of stratified stability, is the necessary character of evolution from which time takes its direction. And it is not a forward direction in the sense of a thrust toward the future, a headed arrow. What evolution does is to give the arrow of time a barb that stops it from running backward; and once it has this barb, the chance play of errors will take it forward of itself.

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Yet there is a last and deepest question to be asked about time. It concerns our two experiences of time, one of which is the inner time of our body as an organism, and the other is the outer time of evolution. How does it come about that these two times, inner and outer, closed and open, have the same direction? Why does our sense of growing old and of going toward death point the same way as evolution, when we might well have expected the two to point in opposite directions?

The answer lies in the common mechanisms of life, which drive both the closed cycles of the organism and the unbounded plan of evolution. In a living organism, growing old is not a thermal decay, and death is not a fall into the average such as the Second Law describes. As we understand old age, the cells in the organism age individually when they happen to make errors in their internal copying and when these errors are of a kind that repeat or perpetuate themselves. This is also precisely the mechanism that underlies evolution. The cell cannot accommodate the errors because they do not fit into its organization, which is closed. But in the open field of evolution, the errors that are able to repeat or perpetuate themselves are the stuff of creation. The organism experiences the accumulation of errors in its cells as the direction of time toward its death. Evolution goes the same way because its mechanism is the same; and we perceive cosmic time as running the same way also because its direction is pointed by evolution.

Thus our experience of time expresses in us the unity that links the life of the individual to the evolution of all living forms. The living creature and its evolution are the two matched faces of life. In this pairing, evolution is the creative partner: it does not solve a problem, as the cycles of the organism do, but makes a genuine creation—a creature. We can say of it what Piet Hein said of a work of art, in a penetrating phrase: that *it solves a problem which we could not formulate until it was solved.*

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Charles W. Chesnutt

WHEN I WAS LIVING with my parents in a suburb of Cleveland in the 1920s, a new neighbor moved onto our street. My memory of him is very clear. I was then in my early teens, and frequently in the afternoon, when various men who lived in the neighborhood came home from work, I would be playing ball in the street with friends. The different thing about this new neighbor was that he seemed to have time to stop and say a pleasant word or two to us, or perhaps to watch us for a short time. What did not seem unusual to me was the color of his skin. It was a pale coffee color, but it never occurred to me that that in any way set him apart. What did set him apart, in addition to his afternoon ritual, were the clarity and serenity of his eyes and his spontaneous smile.

This gentleman had lived on our street for some four or five months before a delegation of neighbors waited on my father one afternoon. My father, Howell Haydn, who was professor of Biblical Literature at Western Reserve University, was badly crippled, and the combination tended to make the neighbors think of him with deference, and yet at the same time, of course, as not quite one of "the fellows." As a result, they had decided that he was the man on our street best fitted to fulfill a mission that they found imperative.

I overheard the ensuing discussion from a hidden spot in the dining room. I was intensely curious as to why a dozen neighbors would all come formally together to call on my father, and so I stayed throughout their conference.

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The gist of their request was that my father, being a very kind and gentle man, go to our new neighbor and advise him in the most courteous possible way that he really was not wanted on this street, and that therefore they hoped indeed that he would sell his house and move elsewhere. It was with not only pride but a kind of joy that I watched my father struggle to his feet and literally brandish his cane in the faces of his guests. "Get out of my house, you whited sepulchres," he said (I shall never forget the words), "and if one of you dares to approach that fine man with the purpose you have just described to me, I shall personally thrash you."

This from the gentlest of men. They literally scurried out. And Mr. Charles W. Chesnutt, for that is who the man in question was, so far as I know lived in his house on our street for the rest of his life. At least, he was still there when I moved away.

When I received from Walter Teller and John Wideman the two essays that follow this introduction, these memories of course came back. And when we had decided that we would publish the two papers as a reappraisal of an author who is only now being rediscovered, I was urged to set down this personal reminiscence.

HIRAM HAYDN

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REAPPRAISALS: I

Charles W. Chesnutt's Conjuring and Color-Line Stories

WALTER TELLER

After having written half a dozen books and achieving a modest success in his day, Charles W. Chesnutt, a black writer of the turn of the century, dropped out of print and virtually out of sight. His work, unknown for years, recently has been reissued by the University of Michigan Press and is now available in soft cover. When a writer long unheard of and all but forgotten is rediscovered—rescued from the edge of oblivion—it means he has found a place in the scheme of things.

Charles W. Chesnutt was the son of free blacks, Andrew Jackson Chesnutt, a North Carolina countryman, and his wife, Ann Marie Chesnutt, a schoolteacher. Although his parents were free, they were free in name only. Living in a slave state, they enjoyed neither dignity, safety of person, nor the opportunity to improve their lot; and so in the decade before the Civil War they went north to Ohio. Charles was born in Cleveland in 1858. Very light complexioned, he was later described as a person who could have passed, "a voluntary Negro." When the Civil War ended, the Chesnutts returned to North Carolina where Charles, nine years old, saw a lynching.

At fifteen, with only grammar schooling, Chesnutt was teaching black children in rural districts near Fayetteville and working in his father's country store to earn money for his further education. He also managed to do a lot of reading. "As to procuring instruction in Latin, French, German, or music, that is entirely out of the question. First class teachers would not teach a 'nigger,' and I would have no other sort," he wrote in the journal he had begun keeping.* Not long after, however, he met a certain Professor Neufeld, a German Jew—an outsider like himself—who was willing to tutor him in German and French. Latin he somehow picked up himself. By the time he was twenty he was teaching in the leading black school in the state and had married Susan Perry, daughter of the prosperous black proprietor of the Fayetteville Hotel barber shop. At twenty-two he became principal of the State Colored Normal School.

Within the next five years he resigned from the Colored Normal School, left North Carolina, and went back to Cleveland, his birthplace. While working there as a stenographer for the Nickel Plate Railroad—he had mastered shorthand to the tune of two hundred words a minute—he studied law and then passed the bar examination with the highest mark of the year.

During those same years he had been working hard to become a writer. Finally, in 1887, when he was twenty-nine, he broke into the columns of the *Atlantic Monthly* with "The Goophered Grapevine," the first of his conjuring stories, tales of magic and voodoo. It was the first time a Negro work

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* Everyone interested in Chesnutt is indebted to his daughter, Helen M. Chesnutt, for her biography, *Charles Waddell Chesnutt: Pioneer of the Color Line,* University of North Carolina Press, 1952, filled with extracts from Chesnutt's journals and correspondence.

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of fiction reached a large white audience. "I think I must write a book," he had noted earlier. "I feel an influence that I cannot resist calling me to the task. . . . Fifteen years in the South, in one of the most eventful eras of its history, among a people whose life is rich in the elements of romance, under conditions calculated to stir one's soul to the very depths—I think there is here a fund of experience, a supply of materials, which a skillful pen could work up with tremendous effect. . . ."

The situation of the blacks had worsened in the twenty years since Reconstruction. While the recently freed Negroes were being disfranchised and subjected to new Jim Crow laws, writers and publishers, North and South, were cranking out fantasies of antebellum plantation life. White readers were weeping over stories of benevolent masters and humble, appreciative slaves. How far could Chesnutt go in opposing those popular sentimental fictions and still find a publisher? Although his style was matter of fact and unimpassioned, he never glossed over the tragedies of slavery, or postbellum racial struggles.

Chesnutt's first book, *The Conjure Woman,* published in 1899, consists of seven related stories narrated by a white man whom the reader knows only by his first name, John. It was a subtle touch, for slaves had had only one name; the dignity of family and surname had been denied them. In *The Conjure Woman* dignity is switched from white to black; the poor black Uncle Julius has more of it than the rich white John. John and his invalid wife Annie, seeking a milder climate and land suitable for a vineyard, leave Ohio for North Carolina; they make the reverse of Chesnutt's and most blacks' migration. John buys a run-down plantation and unexpectedly gets as part of the bargain an old ex-slave, Uncle Julius. Uncle Julius feels he owns the place; he has lived there all his life. It soon becomes clear that although he is only a gardener, he knows how to get his way. When he wants something done, or left undone, he makes his point by telling John and Annie a troubling, haunting, magicking story of slavery days. By and large, John is not taken in; he knows Uncle Julius is playing tricks and finds it amusing. He hears the black man's dialect speech but is deaf and blind to the real worth of what he is saying; for although on the surface Uncle Julius is entertaining his employers with his tales of slavery, underneath he is trying to enlighten them concerning its horrors.

In "Sis Becky's Pickaninny," Uncle Julius tells of a slave mother who is traded off for a racehorse. As her new owner leads her away, she is deceived into leaving her baby behind with the rest of the slaves. The slaves consult a conjure woman who mixes a potion of roots and tells them how to use it. The result is that the horse becomes sick and Sis Becky, although not ill, looks as though she is dying. Feeling cheated, both parties to the trade demand their former properties back. The horse is returned undamaged; Sis Becky and her baby are reunited. Slaves and a conjure woman have won.

On the other hand, in "Po' Sandy," a slave husband and wife are parted from one another—the husband sold off—in spite of all manner of conjuring to prevent it. The incantations, charms, spells and goofers with which slaves sought to redress their wrongs were, after all, no match for the life-and-death power of masters and overseers. The black's ability to find signs and omens in nature—the seasons, trees, birds and animals—his appealing intimacy with natural phenomena—was only a poetic, an imaginary defense.

Chesnutt found his material for *The Conjure Woman* in the past and the naïve, in local color and regional legend. For his second book, *The Wife of His Youth and Other Stories of the Color Line,* also published in 1899, he advanced into uncharted territory, the rising and more sophisticated problems of persons with mixed blood, understandably of particular interest to him.

In the color-line stories, race conflict thrusts each of the leading characters into inhumane situations. "The Sheriff's Children" tells of a young mulatto arrested by a white Southern sheriff who turns out to

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be his father. The mulatto dies of a gunshot wound mistakenly inflicted by his half-sister, the sheriff's white daughter.

In the title story, "The Wife of his Youth," Chesnutt examined another aspect, the fact that marriage between slaves had not been binding legally. The light complexioned emancipated protagonist who has gone North, has to decide in his own conscience whether to return to the black woman he had married when both were young slaves, or discard her and move up with a whiter woman into "the best colored society of the country."

After writing a short biography of the black abolitionist, orator and journalist, Frederick Douglass (1817-1895), Chesnutt tried his hand at novels on racial social problems: *The House Behind the Cedars,* 1900; *The Marrow of Tradition,* 1901; and *The Colonel's Dream,* 1905, all of them less successful than the short stories. By 1905 he found that his earnings from writing would not support the kind of middle-class life he wanted—a house in one of the better parts of Cleveland and college education for his four children—and so he returned to practising law. He took a more active role in civic affairs and was a member of the General Committee of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People from its beginning.

Long afterward, in 1928—four years before he died—Chesnutt received the N.A.A.C.P.'s Spingarn Medal "for his pioneer services as a literary artist and his distinguished career as a public-spirited citizen." On that occasion he said, "My books were written, from one point of view, a generation too soon. There was no demand then as there is now for books by and about colored people. And I was writing against the trend of public opinion on the race question. . . . And I had to sell my books chiefly to white buyers. At that time the Negro was inarticulate. I think I was the first man in the United States who shared his blood to write serious fiction."

Chesnutt held to the aim set early in life. He had noted in his journal, "The object of my writings would be not so much the elevation of the colored people as the elevation of the whites—for I consider the unjust spirit of caste which is so insidious as to pervade a whole nation, and so powerful as to subject a whole race . . . to scorn and social ostracism—I consider this a barrier to the moral progress of the American people. . . ."

Since morals, or moral progress, as he called it, is the underlying concern of all committed writing, Chesnutt clearly was on the right track. His conjure stories stick in the mind, in their way, artifacts of chattel slavery. His color-line stories are like morality plays, their characters shaped by social forces.

As American history is revised and, one hopes, brought closer to the truth of the way things were, as literary canons are reexamined and broadened and books that were formerly overlooked or excluded become accepted, Chesnutt's work gains in historic value. Chesnutt himself comes across as a man of his time but in the vanguard too; he had the ability and imagination to enlarge the field of indigenous themes and thus widen the base of literature.

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Charles W. Chesnutt: *The Marrow of Tradition*

JOHN WIDEMAN

The fiction of Charles Waddell Chesnutt has suffered from the lack of serious readers and serious critical attention. The period in which the main body of his work was published (1899-1905) was a time when North and South had reconciled their differences over the Negro problem and cemented a prosperous, commercial partnership, an epoch that saw the European nations in a mad rush for the resources and cheap labor of the nonwhite world, when the doctrine of white supremacy was the essential ingredient harmonizing the economic, social and political philosophies that justified the thrust of European industrialized societies toward global control and domination. Given such a period, it is not surprising that the work of a nonwhite author who took as his dominant theme the dehumanizing, destructive consequences of racial prejudice was ignored by the reading public. The continued neglect of Chesnutt is perhaps an indication of the persistence of those racist attitudes so pompously rationalized by civilized men at the dawning of the twentieth century.

To honor its part of the political compromise that allowed Rutherford B. Hayes to be elected president in 1876, the Hayes administration rapidly abdicated responsibility for the newly freed Negro slaves. Titling his book *The Negro: The Southerner's Problem,* Thomas Nelson Page was not so much arguing for a point of view as he was accurately describing the relationship between the federal government and the black man at the turn of the century. The political abandonment of the Negro to the good judgment of the reconstructed slavocracy was paralleled in literature by the ascendancy of white, Southern writers (the plantation school) who attempted to sustain through their portrayal of black characters that myth of Negro inferiority that had long served the apologists of slavery.

A Chesnutt character such as Doctor Miller can be viewed simply as a reaction against prevailing stereotypes, a well-intentioned but predictably flat black knight created to do battle with the defamers of his race. But Chesnutt's innovations as well as his importance as a novelist, have been seen too often in a narrow historical sense (he is remembered as a pioneer, the first black author published in the *Atlantic*), and then dismissed as a curiosity, quaint, genteel, worth at best a footnote in the mainstream anthologies. Examining his most complex and successful work, *The Marrow of Tradition,* I hope to demonstrate the broader historical and artistic implications of his imagination.

The Marrow of Tradition divides into two distinct sections. In the larger section, chapters one through twenty-six, Chesnutt wishes to render on a broad canvas a panoramic view of Southern society. For Chesnutt, the truth of the South can be encompassed only by a comprehensive overview that includes all classes, both races, and a variety of perspectives—social, economic and political. To examine life in the

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South, he creates the town of Wellington and its inhabitants as a focus for his novel. The narrative unfolds through a series of set pieces: a birth, a christening, scenes in a nursery, a segregated train, a small-town newpaper office. Many characters, black and white, are introduced, and through their manner of speaking as well as their positions in the town, we begin to gain a sense of familiarity with Wellington. The casual pace of the narrative and the seemingly arbitrary selection of detail are belied by the tension, self-deception and dishonesty that eventually culminate in a violent crime. Sandy, a black servant, is accused of robbery, rape and murder.

Mammy Jane's dialect version of the Carteret family history had warned the reader at the beginning of the novel that at least two Wellingtons exist. Two sets of chroniclers, one black, the other white, have recorded the history of Wellington. The blacks remember the hypocrisy and violence of the slaveholding past because the caste system of the town demands an observance of rituals in their daily lives—rituals that perpetuate the master-slave relationship. The whites forget, because they must believe that the supremacy of white over black in Wellington is not the result of the criminal abuse of power but is sanctioned by an abiding supernatural order that justifies and protects the town.

A fresh instance of murder and robbery exposes the fragile truce between these antagonistic versions of reality. Violence kept alive in the continued oppression of black by white explodes in all its ugliness when a dissolute young white man, Tom Delamere, disguises himself as a black and robs his aunt in order to pay off his gambling debts. She dies of the shock, and Sandy is accused of the crime. A lynching is barely averted as the citizens of Wellington discard their veneer of civilization and collectively act out the ritual drama of outraged white purity versus the "burly, black brute." Even when Sandy's innocence is established, and the identity of the murderer known, the leaders of Wellington cannot alter the time-honored script. Evidence is suppressed and the town slowly returns to "normalcy," a normalcy paid for by a series of rationalizations and falsifications whose intent is to deny the town's guilt:

> They must not lynch the Negro, and yet, for the credit of the town, its aristocracy, and the race, the truth of this ghastly story must not see the light.

Two transitional chapters, "The Vagaries of the Higher Law," and "In Season and Out," summarize the events that have transpired in Wellington. The essay style of these chapters should not suggest lack of artistry. Their documentary tone adds to the realism cultivated by Chesnutt throughout the Wellington section and supplies the global perspective that reminds us that Wellington's crime did not occur accidentally or in a vacuum. The reader has witnessed the conscious distortion of history; he has seen how a society can willfully turn its back on the truth, choosing instead to wear the emperor's clothes. The fabric of the social order can become a lie, a self-imposed delusion that flies apart at the slightest challenge.

Chesnutt balances his straightforward expository prose with highly dramatic cameos that not only illustrate the morality and logic of his argument but subtly render, as all good fiction must, the word into flesh. "In Season and Out" concludes with a close-up of Mammy Jane's son Jerry and a group of Wellington's white civic leaders. Their interaction epitomizes the meaning of the novel's first 247 pages. Truth, frank disclosure, an acknowledgment of mutual humanity, are impossible. In a perverse display of subterfuge and imagination, Jerry and the white men literally create one another each time they meet.

> "This stuff [skin lightener] is rank poison, Jerry," continued the general with a mock solemnity which did not impose upon Jerry, who nevertheless listened with an air of great alarm. He suspected that the general was making fun of him; but also knew that the general would like to think that Jerry believed him in earnest; and to please the white folks was Jerry's consistent aim in life.

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The second, shorter section of *Marrow* (chapters twenty-nine through thirty-seven) measures on an intimate human scale the cost of a social order built on lies. Dr. Miller, his wife, and Olivia Carteret are the characters who dominate. Dr. Miller is Wellington's most successful Negro in the sense that he is as close to white as the town's written and unwritten laws will allow any black to be. His "white" appearance, his superior education, deportment, speech, wealth and social standing seem to place Miller in a class by himself, making him the classic "middle man," neither fish nor fowl, whose existence both dramatizes the arbitrariness of distinctions based on race and simultaneously reinforces the absolute force of such distinctions.

The wealth of incidents and details contained in Helen Chesnutt's biography of her father indicates that much of Miller's personality was a projection of Charles Waddell Chesnutt. Chesnutt was a man who seemed extraordinarily in control of himself, stable, disciplined, capable of enormous sustained effort, a self-taught intellectual whose strivings for knowledge, culture and a career brought him into line with the Anglo-Saxon success model of his age. Like Miller, Chesnutt had learned to compartmentalize; the roles of professional man, father of a family, member of an oppressed minority, could be separated so that success in one area would not be undercut by insult or frustration in another. Chesnutt could view his writing as a business and give up a full-time commitment to it because the income from his books did not support his family in the style they were accustomed to. On one hand such compartmentalization is admirable and healthy, but taken to the extreme sanctioned by Western industrialized culture at the turn of the century, such an aptitude allowed Christian gentlemen to butcher and rob the nonwhite peoples of the earth. By forestalling an honest appraisal of the whole man, by resisting that long, hard look at the stresses and contradictions inherent in the multiplicity of "faces" he presented to Wellington, Miller was committing a perilous blunder. Chesnutt was serious enough, insightful enough, to realize that the individual will someday, somehow, be called upon to account for the arbitrary divisions by which he has shaped his life.

The accounting, the paying of dues, is anticipated by sensitive men and seldom without dread. Chesnutt perceived himself as securely part of the mainstream of American society, yet his race and its reflection in the perspective and content of his writing gradually alienated him from complete participation. Although it first seemed only a subtle wedge, the color line as it existed in the literary sphere made writing unprofitable for Chesnutt, and eventually, as a vocation, impossible. His literarily stagnant later life, with its compulsive, artificial distractions, was the eventual toll. As a foreshadowing epiphany of Chesnutt's suppressed dread, Miller is not allowed to sink slowly into oblivion but is cut down abruptly, absolutely. Racial awareness must be maintained by a Negro in American society no matter how many other roles he plays or how well he plays them. Ironically, there is no other means of transcending race. The cost of remembering blackness may be annoying, painful, an insupportable burden, or a heightened consciousness of self that is integrative and toughening, but the cost of forgetting is annihilation, sudden or subtle.

Miller's wife Janet is the half sister of Olivia Carteret, yet the sisters, although sharing an uncanny likeness ("Dey ce't'nly does favor one annuder—anybody mought low dey wuz twins, if dey did n' know better") and the same father, have never spoken. The sordid details of the Carteret family history, which Mammy Jane unfolds at the opening of *Marrow,* have robbed Janet and Olivia of the possibility of human communication. Instead of sisterly affection, their relationship is defined by gothically distorted expectations and apprehensions.

> Olivia felt a violent wave of antipathy sweep over her toward this baseborn sister who had thus thrust herself beneath her eyes. If she had not cast her brazen glance toward the

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window, she herself would not have turned away and lost sight of her child. To this shameless intrusion, linked with Clara's carelessness, had been due the catastrophe, so narrowly averted, which might have darkened her own life forever.

The chaos that nearly engulfed Wellington earlier in the novel never recedes far below the surface of events. When Olivia Carteret burns the last written record of her sister's rightful inheritance, she is acting as an individual, but her act parallels the town's attempt to tamper with the truth of history. In a situation that demanded that she act as a moral woman, she acted as a "white" woman, which meant that she could set aside all consideration of Janet's rights simply because Janet was black.

If the woman had been white—but the woman had not been white, and the same rule of moral conduct did not, could not, in the very nature of things, apply, as between white people! For, if this were not so, slavery had been, not merely an economic mistake, but a great crime against humanity.

By focusing on a series of individual acts which grew out of a collective, systematized distortion of the slaveholding past, Chesnutt forces the reader to perceive the inevitability of violence—and to recognize the responsibility that all the citizens of Wellington must bear for living a lie.

In the spring and summer of 1901, at the height of his fame as a fiction writer, Chesnutt was working on the novel, originally based on a race riot in the state where he had grown up and taught school. During a lecture tour of the South that year, he assiduously gathered firsthand accounts of the Wilmington, North Carolina massacre. Although his reflections on the riot, together with his impressions of the South, were profoundly dispiriting, Chesnutt felt he had begun a "much better book than I have heretofore written."

Since two books of short stories, a novel and a biography had brought much acclaim but only a fraction of the income he had earned from his previous jobs, Chesnutt needed more than aesthetic satisfaction from his new book: "Upon its reception will depend in some measure whether I shall write, for the present, any more 'Afro-American' novels; for a man must live and consider his family." Unfortunately, the publication of *The Marrow of Tradition* occasioned more controversy than sales. As has been so often the case, a handful of aggressive critics will use a new novel by a black writer as an excuse to air their sentiments on the "Negro question," and since the majority of the reading public already have their minds made up about Negroes, they either agree wholeheartedly with the critic or stop reading the review after its ideological stance becomes apparent. In either case the novel as an imaginative experience to be shared arouses no more curiosity for the reader of the review than it did for the reviewer.

The complex attitude Chesnutt developed toward the disaster in Wilmington is embodied in his characterization of Dr. Miller. Present throughout the novel, Miller seems to stand as an ideal character, one of DuBois's "talented tenth" of Negro intellectuals who could absorb the highest values and professional skills of Western culture and use those for the uplift and betterment of their race. A reader as acute as Leroi Jones, in reaction to what he mistakenly perceives as Chesnutt's elitist, accommodationist point of view, chides both author and hero:

This kind of hideous attitude in a Negro (and most of the Negro novelists of the time were quite close to Chesnutt in their social attitudes) could only stem from an acceptance of the idea of the superiority of the white man, or at least the proposition that the Negro, somehow, must completely lose himself within the culture and social order of the ex-master. It is another aspect of the slave mentality.

The problem with Jones's assessment is that he makes a total identification between Chesnutt the author and Miller the character. Although Chesnutt the man shares many traits with the "refined Afro-American doctor" he has created, Chesnutt the author builds distance between the narra-

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tive voice of *Marrow* and Miller's point of view. It is instructive to observe the sentiments on accommodationists that Chesnutt recorded at another occasion.

> If to live is the first duty of man, as perhaps it is the first instinct, then those who thus stoop to conquer may be right. But is it needful to stoop so low, and if so, where lies the ultimate responsibility for this debasement?

Does *Marrow* endorse the position of Miller? Does Chesnutt stand or fall with the norms that govern Miller's stance toward the whites and blacks of Wellington? If, as I have suggested, the strongest effects of the novel are achieved through accumulation, if its structure is dynamic and requires the reader to keep in mind that history is not simply progressive but cyclical, and that personal, family, communal, national and finally global history are part of the same spiraling process, then one would refrain from categorizing Miller until all the evidence is in.

Instead of offering more biographical, psychological analysis of Chesnutt and thereby falling into that large category of critics who describe the black writer as *created rather than creator,* I wish to examine the evidence supplied by Chesnutt's storytelling art. The reader must look at all the elements of that art, from Chesnutt's comprehension of national and international politics, which provides the organizing theme of the novel, to stylistic details such as the sustained leitmotiv of disguise and masquerade warning the reader never to accept appearance for reality in Wellington. Further, the reader should take into account the variety of narrative tones, which range from intrusive essay-commentary to dramatic presentation. The book is further enriched with dialect, folk maxims and parodies of newspaper verbiage, all providing a fascinating cross section of language styles written and spoken at the turn of the century.

Chapters one through twenty-six, which I have designated as part one, have a distinctive set of characteristics that distinguish their narrative mode from that of the second section. A large cast of characters, numerous changes of scene, abrupt transition of mood, place and time, all contribute to the panoramic effect of part one. The leisurely pace of the early chapters is set by the voice of a narrator who does not hesitate to intrude himself into the action to make authorial judgments or asides. Although at times crudely manipulative or redundant, for the most part the voice is knowledgeable and humane, rising and falling to control the rhythm of the novel.

By chapter twenty-seven the action that centered on the crime of young Delamere seemingly has been closed. The reader has been exposed to the inner workings of Wellington as well as to the voice and values of the narrator who has acted as anatomist. Chesnutt can assume now that the reader has a basic working knowledge of the town and its inhabitants; therefore, as the climactic massacre of the blacks unfolds, the storyteller can take a different stance toward his audience—he can come closer to Joyce's third mode of artistic creation, the dramatic, in which the artist is invisible behind his artifact, silently paring his fingernails.

In his presentation of the massacre, Chesnutt is less chatty, his style is tighter, leaner, he allows characters and events to speak for themselves. The steadfast loyalty of Mammy Jane to the Carterets is rewarded by violent death in the streets. Jerry's record of sycophancy and slavishness does not protect his hide as he is caught in the fusillade of bullets that a white mob aims at Josh Green's supporters. Ellis, the young, white liberal from the North, is traumatized into inaction as he wanders through the bloody streets, his zombielike trance echoing Dr. Miller's shocked numbness when he drives his buggy through the chaos. Josh Green, with his cry of an eye for an eye, goes down in a hail of bullets, but not before he fulfills the self-avowed purpose of his life: vengeance on the enemy who ruined his family. Is it more than coincidental that Josh dies defending the hospital Miller has built? Was Miller correct in refusing the plea of Josh and the other blacks to lead

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them in self-defense? By single-mindedly searching for his family during the disaster, was Miller defining his responsibility too narrowly? Mammy Jane, Jerry, Josh and finally Miller's wife Janet, must be considered individually, but also as personifications of the turmoil within Miller and the whole black community. In this light it becomes apparent that Miller's primary focus for self-identification, his immediate family and his professional life, is not being dramatized as the ideal resolution of the conflicts a black man in Miller's position must face.

By the end of the novel Miller has undergone a literal and symbolic descent. He has been brutally "leveled" to the status of the town's lowliest nigger. His hospital has been burned down, his son is dead, his very existence as a physical body has been undermined as Chesnutt uses the metaphor of invisibility to characterize him during his descent into "The Valley of the Shadow." Ordered down from his buggy by a white man, Miller asks, "Why?" The man's answer is simple: "Because we've ordered you to come down! This is the white people's day, and when they order, a nigger must obey. We're going to search you for weapons." The paragraph following this exchange is notable because it includes many features of Chesnutt's style: repetition, symbolic action, sustained imagery.

> Miller stepped down from his buggy. His interlocutor, who made no effort at disguise, was a clerk in a dry goods store where Miller bought most of his family and hospital supplies. He made no sign of recognition, however, and Miller claimed no acquaintance. This man, who had for several years emptied Miller's pockets in the course of more or less legitimate trade, now went through them, aided by another man, more rapidly than ever before, the searchers convincing themselves that Miller carried no deadly weapon upon his person. Meanwhile, a third ransacked the buggy with like result. Miller recognized several others of the party, who made not the slightest attempt at disguise, though no names were called by any one.

Miller is mistaken for their enemy as he rides past black peasants in his white man's buggy. He is invisible to Old Sally the nurse, "Are you *sho* dat's you, doctuh?" and Mrs. Butler, "Is it really you, Dr. Miller?" Miller is neither white nor black, but a shadowy ghost slipping through the streets and fields of Wellington: "In the dusk his own color, slight in the daytime, would not attract attention, and by dodging in the shadows he might avoid those who might wish to intercept him." The social order is exposed as chaos. The truth of the riot forces Wellington to recognize in itself *The Marrow of Tradition,* the bone-deep knowledge that men are either black or white and that nothing can occur between them that does not first take into account that dichotomy. This truth has stripped away the margin that Miller had believed supported his special kind of life.

His life's work in ruins, his future snatched away by the murder of his son, Miller is morally as well as physically invisible. He cannot make a choice. Rather than answering the pleas of Mrs. Carteret to save her son's life, he equivocates, finally deferring to his wife, asking her to decide for him. The sisters, then, are left to sort out accounts. Desperate because of the peril to her child, Olivia Carteret had gone to her knees to beg Miller's assistance. "The next moment, with a sudden revulsion of feeling, she had thrown herself at his feet —at the feet of a Negro, this proud white woman—and was clasping his knees wildly." She is even prepared to recognize Janet as her sister and to bestow upon the daughter of a slave the share of the inheritance that is rightfully hers.

> Whether the truth would still further incense Janet, or move her to mercy, she could not tell; she would leave the issue to God. "Listen, sister!" she said. "I have a confession to make. You are my lawful sister. My father was married to your mother. You are entitled to his name, and to half the estate."

Janet attempts to spare the life of the Carteret child by sending her husband to tend him, but Chesnutt makes clear the sources of her motivation. In her grief she has come to the conscious recognition of the past and its cost. She understands how

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foolish she was to place in another's hands the right to legitimize her identity.

You imagined that the shame of being a Negro swallowed up every other ignominy,—and in your eyes I am a Negro, though I am your sister, and you are white, and people have taken me for you on the streets,—and you, therefore, left me nameless all my life! Now, when an honest man has given me a name of which I can be proud, you offer me the one of which you robbed me, and of which I can make no use. For twenty-five years I, poor, despicable fool, would have kissed your feet for a word, a nod, a smile. Now, when this tardy recognition comes, for which I have waited so long, it is tainted with fraud and crime and blood, and I must pay for it with my child's life!

The last sentence of the novel is: "There's time enough, but none to spare." The meaning of this sentence, just as the meaning of Miller's attempt to resolve the question of his blackness in Wellington at the turn of the twentieth century, must be seen in the total context of the novel, a context that is subtle, complex and suggestive far beyond the treatment traditionally accorded it.

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Letter From Europe . . . . . .

ANTHONY BURGESS

As I am writing this on an Italian ship outward-bound for America from Naples, I suppose it can just about be termed a letter from Europe. I am not sorry to be leaving Rome in order to spend an academic year in New York, although undoubtedly I shall be pleased, next spring, at the prospect of going back again: our best-liked cities are cities of the imagination. But the Rome of immediate memory is, although still physically beautiful, a very wearing place to live in. It is, for one thing, very, very noisy. New Yorkers who complain about their own auditory pollution do not know the half of it. It is a point of honor for Roman drivers to hold down the honker button in traffic jams, turning a device of reasonable communication into a mindless noise of rage; Lambrettas and Vespas are deliberately fitted by the owners with street-rocking blasters. During the last *Festa de Noantri* in Trastevere, a concert was given by youths playing electric guitars, their twangs amplified to a volume that made me, for one, physically ill, temporarily mindless, a clawing thing rather than a rational animal. The Romans themselves bear the extremes of noise with every appearance of placidity, but God knows what desperate ruin is at work on their nervous systems. It is said that Roman children are no longer capable of hearing the ripple of fountain water or the rustling of leaves. Nobody cares, of course. Again and again I wonder at the myth of the musicality of the Italians. As America's Ed Sullivan seems only to be able to taste even the sweetest wine when he puts some of his portable Sweet 'n' Low into it, so urban Italians, and especially Romans, can only take music when it is simple and ear-splitting.

The visible beauty of Rome remains, although it becomes increasingly hard to see it, what with the press of traffic. The familiar glow of pollution is masking the sempiternal blue heaven. The Tiber is filthy. These factors are enough in themselves to qualify the traditional Roman gaiety and insouciance, but a new element has offically been added to Roman life to deepen the new gloom—the compulsory closing of shops, and even some cafés, on Sunday. The dullest town in the world, I used to think, was Sunday Wigan, or perhaps Stoke-on-Trent; but any provincial English street now shines with a Sabbath gaiety that shames the Piazza di Spagna. We need only rocketing inflation, unstable government, wildcat strikes and the threat of resurgent fascism to make Rome one of the unhappier cities of Europe.

Perhaps I could bear all this for the sake of being left alone, as I mostly am, to get on with my writing, but every writer needs a modicum of intellectual stimulation, and this Rome does not readily give. I have been receiving more attention from the Italian press than I had any right to expect as a somewhat obscure British novelist before the appearance of Kubrick's *Arancia Meccanica,* but I am depressed by the hideboundedness, the essentially

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✪ When he wrote this column, ANTHONY BURGESS was on his way to New York where he will spend a year teaching a course in the twentieth century British novel at City College. He is at work on a novel about Napoleon.

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political approach of the journalists who come to lap up my whisky. Because I will not subscribe to a left-wing or "progressive" interpretation of my work, I am dubbed fascist. There is no openmindedness, no willingness to accept new parameters or even that traditional view of art as art and not as a device of persuasion. I am permitted to find fault with any pope except the late John, the pope I am most inclined to disparage. John has become a sort of saint of the progressives, a thwarted secular reformer—a considerable if posthumous achievement for any cleric in a land of anticlerics. If, in an interview, I diffidently mention the faith of my fathers, with its intellectual dignity and its fixed but reasonable dogmas, the antifascist sneers begin, and I shudder at the impending columnar venom.

Rome is dim on literary excitement and journalistic integrity, but the cinema continues to provide a firm, witty, relevant commentary on Italian inefficiency, hypocrisy and corruption. Some films—such as the latest Dustin Hoffman exposé of the Italian divorce position, *Alfredo, Alfredo*—are clearly designed to give the outside world a picture of some aspects of the Italian mess, but the great majority of the films we see in Rome are intended for domestic mastication. Indeed, some of them—such as *Nel Nome del Popolo Italiano* and *All' Onorevole Piacciono le Donne*—could hardly be well understood outside Italy. The great domestic theme is a kind of chimera of corruption whose head is the Church, whose body the State and whose many limbs such assorted agents as the Mafia and Italo-American big business. That the Italians are an ancient and cynical people, unhopeful of real change, is attested by their purely aesthetic enjoyment of even the most rampaging satire. It is a Latin quality, this capacity to enjoy the elegance and wit without taking the message too seriously. The commandments of Vichy regime concentration camps would relish the *spiritualité* of the subversive satires put on by the inmates; the Germans, of course, would never even allow such entertainments.

There is an assumption that Rome will always survive, whatever happens. The Rome of Juvenal was atrocious and so is the Rome of Fellini; things hardly change at all, and the essential life has gone on for two millennia—garlic, wine, talk, gesticulation, harmless exhibitionism. But with unbreathable air, a dead Tiber, and the first serious signs of petral corrosion, it becomes increasingly difficult to believe in the cyclical process of decay and renewal. Cities can die, and Rome has no divine immunity.

The *Rafaello* is now through the Straits of Gibraltar and is into the Atlantic. I am not, so far, impressed by either my traveling companions or the first-class cuisine. Last night at dinner it took me nearly ninety minutes to be served some chilled bouillon, a plate of cold beef and salad and a lemon sherbet. I kept thinking of Napoleon and how he would have responded to this nonsense. During the Consulate he said: "If you want to dine well, dine with the Second Consul. If you want to dine badly, dine with the Third Consul. If you want to dine quickly, dine with me." Twenty minutes for the entire meal, including coffee. My wife and son and I come into the dining saloon on the first stroke of the carillon, trying to be helpful to the stewards, but we are still at our table when the very latecomers—who are welcomed profusely, as if with relief that they should deign to come at all—are wading into their seventh course. There seems to be a fair number of Mafia chiefs on board, courteous enough men whose Italian is old-fashioned but whose American still bears an immigrant twang, and these do well in the dining saloon. They are jealous of their women, who are dressed mostly in a kind of provocative Directory style, and one dreads accidentally taking a seat by one of them in the ship's cinema. The non-Latin element among the first-class passengers is mostly New York Jewish, and a surprisingly reactionary lot they are, full of commie-killing and the justice of the Vietnam War and how proud we would be of our son if he fell for his country. It takes some time to adjust again

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to the fact that American Jewry, unlike any other in the world, *can* be reactionary. Italian Jews have traditionally been left-wing intellectual, and if they were persecuted by Mussolini it was mainly because of that fact, not primarily because of anti-Semitism. This is why Italian Jewish intellectuals are rather less enthusiastic about the film *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* than the New Yorkers who thronged to see it.

This is a somewhat philistine gang, then, and one wonders again at the irony of the technical designation *soul*—so many souls to a cabin, when it is really so much snoring blubber. Nobody reads anything above the level of Irving Stone's *The Passions of the Mind,* which is considered rather heavy going (it is, of course, but not in the way these souls mostly mean), and nobody has ever heard of me, not even the aficionados of film violence. I have an American friend in Rome, John Sebastian, perhaps the finest harmonica player in the world, and I spend much of the day writing a sonata for his instrument and guitar. This typecasts me as a composer and a rather eccentric one, since I have to keep checking on what is physically possible for either instrument and I don't have either instrument with me. Thus I contort my mouth and stick my tongue into an imaginary harmonica hole or spread my fingers over invisible guitar frets. As soon as they see me coming in with my pen and music paper, the Italian bar stewards immediately turn on *real* music to exorcise my ghostly kind. The Italians are really the most wearing people in the world to have to write music among.

Last night, in pursuance of some obscure economizing policy of the Italia Line, the ship's cinema put on a film of the 1930s—*Random Harvest,* with Ronald Colman and Greer Garson. As Marshall McLuhan was always telling us in the days when he existed, the televisual experience of an old movie is very different from the full-size cinema one. This was not "The Late, Late Show" but a civilized evening performance on a ship rocking in the threat of an approaching hurricane; the ladies and gentlemen in evening dress, smelling of liqueurs; the lady next to me, to my disquiet, either the wife or daughter (they are nearly interchangeable) of one of the gloomier Mafia chiefs. It was curious, ghostly, remarkably sweet. How *nice* our film stars used to be, and what a surprise it was to everybody, I remembered, when Greer Garson disclosed to the world that she had legs, and very delightful ones too. How comforting and respectable those old bourgeois myths were, with Colman marrying Garson in a state of war-induced loss of memory, then recovering his memory and forgetting all about her, realizing that he was lord of some great manor. That old aristocratic life, with bowing butlers and comic cabdrivers and virtue bizarrely rewarded in the end, and no one in bed with anyone until after the final credits. Unreal, snobbish, dreamstuffy, at least those old films had stories: scene moved swiftly to scene, in a pattern of highly economical fictional logic, and no damned nonsense about showy camera work or gratuitous fornication. The *mafiosa* next to me (warned by some accompanying male relative or gunman to move over and leave an empty seat between herself and me) was audibly moved by the sweet and intelligible decency of it all.

At last one of the first-class passengers has discovered that I am not a composer at all (except in the most pococurantist of ways), but really a writer. He has just invited or ordered me over to meet his wife, who is the real reading one of the family, and she interrogates me while she gets on with her crocheting: "And what sort of books do you write, Mr. Burgess?"

"Oh, novels mostly."

"Tell me the names of some of them and then I can tell you whether I've read any."

"It's rather a long list, I'm afraid, and I honestly don't think you can have read any, you know."

"Well, I have a friend in Manhattanville who's a writer, so I shall ask her about you when I get back. She's read *everybody.*"

And so I am dismissed as somebody vaguely suspect. All this serves me right for traveling first-class. Next time I shall

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learn my place and travel with the lean intellectuals in tourist.

New York approaches, and this ceases to be a letter from Europe. Back to reality again. The Mafia chiefs have their best black on, ready to be masterful with luggage. The New York Jews sigh with pleasure at the prospect of being back in the freest country in the world. I, the sole Englishman aboard, make ready to grapple with immigration. Two keen-eyed immigration officers, young men from Columbia, recognize me and say, "Welcome to New York, Mr. Burgess." A moment far sweeter than the denouement of *Random Harvest*. The lady with the writer friend in Manhattanville hears. Two of the Mafia men hear. Nobody welcomes *them*.

MELVILLE CANE

Changing Rooms

At the hospital
the invalid
moved
serenely,
philosophically,
from TERMINAL
to eternal
CARE.

On Escaping Mortal Illness

The Irresist-
ible Reaper,
eyes ashift,
missed
a tuft.

✪ These poems were written since the publication of MELVILLE CANE's book *Eloquent April* early in 1971.

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American Scholar Forum

Women's Liberation: What Will We Lose?

When our forum on women's liberation was ready for publication in the Autumn issue of the SCHOLAR, *I invited various women to read the galleys and to comment on the conversation for this issue. Eight accepted, and their responses appear here.*

—HIRAM HAYDN

MARGARET HOWE FREYDBERG: Much of importance was touched upon in this round table discussion. Disappointingly, though, the issue most important to me, and a basic one, I think, was not generally dealt with—the issue of what the militancy and the "rules" of revolution will do to a certain kind of woman.

I must say here that I want many things to change. I feel, very personally and very intensely, that I want the status of women to be equal to that of men. I want legislation that will give any woman the chance, if she wishes, to have jobs equal to a man's, and equal pay. I want male and female roles based on false premises to go, along with the false pride of roles, their warfare, their destructiveness. I think the goal to be sought has to be the full development and use of individuals, not prototypes, both male and female, without the coercion of rules for *anyone's* behavior. There has to be an acceptance of the fact that one sex is not superior to the other, and that both share an equal responsibility for the direction of manwomankind. I want all this basic change.

But I don't want a certain kind of woman to change.

There are behavioral scientists who claim the existence of a female psyche, physiologically determined. There are others, and some feminists too, who claim that woman's nature is culturally determined, that she is only what she is forced to be through the expectations of the society of her era and through the roles imposed upon her by it. I tend to think that woman is a combination in infinite variety of the two determinations, and that not all, but some, of her attitudes are born of her body, and of her bodily capacities and functions.

One of the varieties of this combination, and perhaps a majority in our society, has been the kind of woman who nourishes, and keeps safe, and holds things together. She has usually been a constructive force at home, and sometimes, but not generally, abroad.

Yet this constructive force has had no really overt or recognized influence in shaping and controlling our world, and I believe that it should have. I believe that if this kind of woman were in a position to readapt and to exert her constructive force, she could refresh and balance the male force that directs and controls society, and that certainly seems unable to check its destructive course.

But I fear that the movement tends to devalue and discourage this kind of woman. And that if it were entirely successful, it would be a powerful force *against* this kind of woman.

A major goal of the movement is equal jobs and equal pay. Yet the woman seeking equality in our society, especially in the job market, must perforce use the male as

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her model, since the arena she will fight in was designed by him and is masterminded by him, and it is with him that she must compete. Webster's definition of competition is: "Common strife for the same object." So there you are. Warfare. There is no doubt but that the competitive nature, male or female, is the antithesis of the constructive one. And thus it seems to follow that the preserving woman, encouraged by the movement, may "win" equality in a limited sense—getting the job in the first place, doing it as well as a man, and getting the same pay as a man. But if she fights according to the existing rules and counteracts them with none of her own, will she not "lose" something of crucial value in terms of true equality, in terms of her preserving self, and in terms of the contributions that this self could make to society? Can this kind of adaptation allow her constructive nature any chance to flourish, or even to survive? Can it do anything but aggravate the antagonism between the sexes, which ought to be subsiding rather than increasing? Will it promise anything but a further impetus to the deterioration of society?

Eleanor Roosevelt not only survived in the arena, but also changed it for the better. She is a transcendent example of the kind of woman I am describing. She humanized everything she came in contact with. She did not take on the coloration of competitive society, and her imprint upon it was always that of a preserving woman.

I hope that a balanced and constructive women's movement can preserve the preserving woman, so that she may flourish wherever she wishes. If she enters the arena, I hope that the movement will encourage her to adapt jobs to herself, not herself to male jobs—particularly in government—and thus to extend her scope, and her impact on society.

CAROLINE C. FISH: The women at the Forum did a lively, witty job of drawing lines around some of the parameters of the women's liberation movement. Only rarely, however, did they deal directly with the subtle moral and ethical problems that face women in relation to men. Periodically, a brave move would be made in this direction, but the discussion was apt to shift to styles of change or how one felt in the changing. In addition to examining the common gains for women in economic categories, or the differences in ethnic expectations, one can put on a new pair of glasses, the prisms of the developmental psychologists, to look at degrees of freedom. Then, perhaps, one begins to see better into what Joan Didion calls the "moral distinctions and ambiguities" in the women's movement.

Liberation suggests freedom, release. Maybe the original question, "If we win, what will we lose?" directed the discussion to thoughts of release. It is easier to list manifest oppressions than to face the hard reality of freedom. Yet freedom, with its corollary justice, must be kept as the central issue. Until the ethical problems involved in freedom are more clearly stated for women, we will only have more of *Plus ça change* . . . .

Philosophers are prone to compose a priori definitions of justice and fairness, but the developmentalists, such as Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg, are taking the long way around and collecting empirical evidence on how individuals change their concepts of liberty and justice over the course of a lifetime. These psychologists find that just as cognitive development goes through invariant, sequential stages of hierarchical integration depending on environmental input and appropriateness of conflict, so does moral development. An awareness of how these stages change, and why, might help us understand how women go about liberating and being liberated, why they continue infighting, experiencing grave aches and pains, and, although certainly no minority in numbers, continue thinking of themselves as a minority.

As a brief case in point, take the question of abortion, a central theme of the women's liberation movement. If a federal liberal abortion law were passed within the next

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year that required a woman to use her own judgment on the necessity of an abortion, you could probably size up the gain/loss ratio of women, not just those in the movement, by an analysis of the reasoning, the justification, used by conflicting groups to support their respective stands. For women who had not gone much beyond the early stages of cognitive/moral development, such a law would tear them from what they need the most—an authority that punishes transgressions, be it father, husband, or Grand Inquisitor. At a bit more refined level, women would be losing their balance in a game they had just learned to play, that of "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours," a pleasant, hedonistic mode of operation centering on their immediate selves. These two groups of women would find it difficult indeed to make up their *own* minds on the validity of an abortion.

Most women in America have been pretty systematically conditioned to stabilize at the next, or conventional, level of moral development. They not only want to conform to society's norms but want "law and order" to help them maintain their attitudes. A uniform federal abortion law, at this time, seems to go beyond the acceptable stereotypes of these women and is painfully threatening to them. A similar reaction came after the first rulings of the Supreme Court on integration, a backlash that is still operating. Finally, the lucky individuals who make it to the last stage, the autonomous, principled level (*here* is your minority), would not suffer loss. They would accept the social contract implied and recognize the inherent value of the law with its universal principles of justice, reciprocity and equality of human beings as individual persons. In summary, the content of reforms may not be as significant to watch as the mode of reasoning that shapes them, supports them, or attacks them.

As we begin to understand and describe these perilously complicated shifts in the course of life that underly the organization and management of thinking and feeling, we are also moving toward a more refined consideration of the consequences of this knowledge. "Raising consciousness" has a new set of implications. But that's another topic for another time.

ROSEMARY PARK: Some discussions of women's lib risk pouring out the baby with the bath in a steamy burst of rhetoric. In this conversation, however, the baby survived and had been perceptively analyzed when the participants quit. At issue was the question of what loss would be entailed if women's lib won. None of the discussants suggested that the question itself seemed to imply that a single life-style would prevail rather than an even greater diversity of life-styles for both men and women. Nor did anyone refer to the necessity of inventing men's lib to help males adjust to the fact that in the future women will be able to and will intend to assume more active roles in public activity than heretofore. Yet both are possible results of a successful women's lib and both mark the end of the Victorian restrictions that we have for so long assumed to represent the normal state of affairs.

The most obvious success of women's lib to date has been the irrefutable documentation of ignorant, simple-minded discrimination against women in all areas of life. The problem is not so much to cut out this cancer, which antidiscrimination legislation accomplishes, but rather to block the metastasis which, with few exceptions, has denied social support to women aspiring to a public career.

With greater practical equality of access to professional training, now guaranteed by law, it will be increasingly evident that professional capability can come in either male or female packaging. After all, it is the capability that counts, not the wrapping. One effect of an increased participation of women at the higher professional levels will be to dispel the illusion that the present clustering of women at the lower

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end of the economic scale is a valid measure of their ability.

It will take men's lib or something similar, however, to help men adjust to a colleague who may occasionally open the door herself but who will not deny you that privilege if you wish to hold it for her. This option is new; it does not mean changing women into men for *x* hours a day and then mandating their reversion to females at the end of the professional work period. It is rather the start of a new relationship or style that does not surrender the fun of femaleness or maleness in order to acquire and cultivate competence and respect. It is, however, only one of the life-styles that women may choose. Women's lib will have made it possible by insisting on excision of discrimination. Only men's lib and women's lib together can alert society to the unnecessary damage and frustration caused by the continued lack of social support for a wider field of activity for women.

DIANA TRILLING: I am afraid I must disagree with the panelists who were scornful of the question around which they were to organize their discussion of women's liberation. The question, "If we win, what do we lose?" is, I think, more than valid, absolutely basic. In fact, even while it was being dismissed, it was frequently referred to without the speakers recognizing that this was happening. Perhaps this was most apparent when Alice Walker spoke of the continuing pressure upon black women to add to the family earnings, a pressure so unremitting that, as she said, most black women would feel that to be supported by their husbands while they themselves took care only of their own households and children was all the freedom, all the "liberation," they could dream of for their sex.

What is implied here for middle-income white women, whose class supplies the chief leadership of the present-day women's movement, cannot be ignored except at some cost to our sense of reality. Fundamental to any useful discussion of an altered relationship between men and women is the problem of economic responsibility. For obviously, so long as men support their wives, they have every right to strike whatever practical and emotional bargain they can with those who are dependent upon them. While female economic dependence is of course far from the whole explanation of male dominance in our society—for one thing, it leaves out of account the complex nature of the biological difference between the sexes and the social and emotional consequences of this difference—it is unmistakable that it makes the best possible condition for male imposition and that it must be dealt with, eliminated, if women are to attain to equality with men.

According to the rules that govern the lives at least of white women in our society and except in situations of financial strain, married women are now entirely free to choose whether or not they will contribute to the family income. That is, they are free to make this choice so long as their husbands consent. This freedom is granted them in return for their fulfilling the duties of the home and in exchange for their conceding to men a superior power in the society. If, then, they elect to give up this freedom in order to achieve another kind of freedom, that of personal, emotional and social parity with men, surely they must be made aware that they are assuming not only the same kind of financial burden that weighs so heavily on their black sisters, but also the same kind of responsibility that harasses the men in our society.

The women on this panel, so far as I am acquainted with them, do indeed earn money, some of them a good deal of it. The work they do, however, is of a kind—writing, university teaching—whose claim on them is not limited to its financial reward. They can no more be described as victims of our infamous modern economic rat race than can their opposite male numbers in the same professions. But this is not the

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situation with the majority of wage earners of either sex. Were the majority of women to become economically responsible for themselves and at least in part financially responsible for their children as well, certainly it is a fair question whether most of them would find their improved status worth the price they were paying for it. At any rate, the matter is worth thinking about instead of dissipating it in frivolous talk about whether, come the day of emancipation for our sex, men will still hold doors open for us. The right to be economically driven to the same degree that men are in our society may be our inalienable human right, but I do believe that women who are themselves professionally established and successful need to be cautious before demanding this right for the whole female population. One must suppose that in the halving of financial responsibility between husband and wife with, as a corollary, an equal division of domestic duties, some large part of the economic and social competitiveness of modern life will be reduced—that part, I mean, which stems from the idea that male economic power is synonymous with male sexual power. But much difficult social and psychological investigation will be required before we can any of us arrive at a sound definition of what in the modern world would truly constitute female liberation.

CLARA CLAIBORNE PARK: The panel apparently found the question less provocative than the Editor had hoped. The consensus was that they'd lose nothing; having men open doors for us is obviously one of the more expendable of satisfactions. The kind of losses mentioned (the privileges of being helped with your coat, of being supported in idleness, of being made to feel helpless and desirable) could only be felt as gains, if self-respect has anything like the same meaning for women as for men. The panel, rejecting this focus, found no other and rambled all over the lot. (Doesn't anyone edit tapes anymore? Or is this a form of reverse discrimination?) The thought arises: Why was there so marked a difference in evaluating the interest of the question, and was this itself a sex difference? To judge the question provocative, someone must have felt some probability of a feeling of genuine loss. Do men, perhaps, *want* us to feel we're losing something?

At any rate, I was surprised that among the possible losses mentioned, all of which were either trivial or demeaning, no one spoke of one loss which might in fact be genuine. No one mourned for the warmth of the household, the created home, that small focus (Latin: "hearth") of order and coherence, cleanliness, even beauty. We all know such homes, don't we? Refuges, frames for autonomous living and growing? That is what the feminine mystique was supposed to be all about, and even in those terrible fifties, it sometimes was. I'm talking about the home as an art form. The panel seemed to agree that homemaking was not a worthy full-time occupation for a woman; Ms. Janeway, in fact, said that there was "so little left of woman's traditional role, so little to take your time," that "inanition and boredom" were inevitable. And yet it's terribly time-consuming, the practice of this art. I can't think of another, except perhaps the composition of long fictions, that requires the same detail in imagination and execution. All that fuss about African violet cuttings, wild strawberry jam, special Christmas decorations, not to mention the work of involving children in all these according to their powers, seems terribly trivial, but it adds up. Is it worth doing? Men have enjoyed and idealized it, but have never given it the value conferred by their full attention and understanding; it is an art form with male consumers but no male critics. Nor have they given it the marketplace value that unfortunately allocates respect in our society. And now women are not taking it seriously either. Having spent the fifties feeling

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guilty if they did anything but homemake, they seem ready to spend the seventies feeling guilty for accepting this as a full-time occupation. But it is a full-time job, especially if the care of children or the old or the ill is involved, as it frequently is. It takes a superwoman to combine it with outside work—a realization obscured, perhaps, by the fact that there are a lot of superwomen around. It's a full-time job for Mrs. Ramsey in *To the Lighthouse*. That's why she fusses so over the *boeuf-en-daube*. She spends her full intellectual and emotional powers fulfilling needs—of husband, children, guests—physical needs, emotional needs, aesthetic needs. And nobody notices what she's doing but Virginia Woolf. It took a woman to see it, because it isn't meant to be seen, it works best when it isn't. A man doesn't notice what goes into the making of that harmony, any more than a child does.

I'm not romanticizing this. It's an art that didn't satisfy me to practice, and a life I wouldn't choose for my daughters (although I should leave it open for them to choose it for themselves). It's a life in which talent is dispersed in a million details (but they do add up, they do add up) and selflessness (dirty word?) is rendered mandatory. If my daughters are to create works of art, I would like them to be the sort you get public credit for.

But I shall feel loss if such homes disappear, homes that worthily—if you know how to look—reflect a woman's powers. Is this what some of the panelists meant by the leisure a woman might not want to lose? "Leisure" seems inaccurate, to say the least: it's hard work, but it is autonomous. Perhaps it can be done mutually, in male-female partnership; maybe men's liberation will allow Mr. Ramsey to interest himself in the *boeuf-en-daube* and free Mrs. Ramsey for a part-time job. Maybe a househusband would do the job as fully, meticulously, and lovingly. I'll wait and see. Mutuality in the creation of works of art is hard to bring off, but it would be worth the effort.

I think I see now, however, why the panel didn't consider this. The assumption behind "If we win, what do we lose," was that the "we's" were feminine, and the question was answered accordingly: nothing. If the disappearance of this particular kind of created harmony is felt as loss, the "we" that feels it is not female but the broader we that includes women, men and children. So the answer to the question is still the same—we, as women, lose nothing, except the dubious satisfactions of excelling in an art whose art is to conceal art, whose best effects are unobstrusive and unrecognized. I'm afraid few will vie for the position of unsung heroine. Fewer still will, like Virginia Woolf, praise exactly that kind of woman they have determined not to be.

JOYCE CAROL OATES: Women will lose the self-hypnotizing room of mirrors in which they've always performed—watching their own images through the eyes of other people, men and women both. They will lose the sinister ability to love themselves only through the activities of others, through the registering of their personalities in other people's imaginations. They will lose the passivity that has always been so protective of their energies. But it isn't just women who are hypnotized, who are passive and deathly, it's really most people—and that fact is illustrated by our national literature, which at the present is almost entirely a construction of subjective word games, imitations of European writers like Beckett and Nabokov, in which the conscious ego is passive, drifting, whimsical, amazed, terrified, amused, but never in control of anything much.

The entire notion of a personality—a consciously constructed, willed, activated and *personal* personality—is being ignored, as if history didn't make quite clear to us that we either construct systems or end up enslaved by the systems of others. The

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only prominent, influential writers of fiction who are trying—really trying—to exert pressure on the difficult era in which we happen to live are Mailer and Bellow. I believe both have struggled quite nobly to define a self in the center of chaos; a defensive, slightly paranoid, terrified self attempting to re-create itself into something else. I feel most strongly about this, particularly since I have spent the past year so far away, where I've been able to think dispassionately about what is happening back home, about the kind of writing that is being turned out and applauded, and about my own career up to this point. I can see in amazement that I have only haphazardly and instinctively, never consciously, broken through that dreaminess myself, and that the whole range of my writing so far has dealt only with one phase of the personality and its possibilities.

At some point in personal and social history the ideal personality moves from being subjective to being objective. I think that the women's liberation movements (which are only part of a general liberalizing struggle in the nation) are helping to force this, and that it is a very mysterious, almost uncontrollable growth, but an inevitable one. It isn't possible to fail, but only to turn back privately; the growth itself can't be stopped.

ELIZABETH JANEWAY: It was interesting to reread "Women on Women" in toto, and I am glad that Patricia McLaughlin did follow my suggestion and write a comment on our talk as she saw (or heard) it. I profited from reading it. In the remarks which follow, I am responding to her statement because I believe I can clear up one or two of the points she raises.

First, let me address myself to her feeling that the women present spoke of other women as "they" and appeared to feel that in talking about "women" they were talking about "other people." Glancing back over the transcription, it seems to me that the discussants (sorry about that word, but it's useful shorthand) did in fact say "we" quite a bit of the time. But I am perfectly willing to admit that *in this discussion* I did not particularly feel that I was a spokeswoman for other women, or that I should seek to identify my views with those of a majority of other women. And I suspect that some of the other discussants, at any rate, felt as I did.

Why? Because, it should be noted, *we are all writers.* Now this is a point that a nonwriter might well overlook. But writers must learn very early on to distance themselves from their material. The created work must detach itself from its creator, and become a thing in itself. If it does not, and if therefore a personal link remains with the author, then the audience, that is the reader or viewer or listener, will not be able to enter into a real relationship—to identify, if you want—with the created work. The technical demands of our work, in short, have instructed us, or programmed us, to deal objectively with material even when this material is emotionally of great importance to us.

So, we came to this discussion, I believe, *not at all* with the feeling that we were there to participate personally in a consciousness-raising session, but rather to use any expertise we might have in looking at the present and future state of women. My remarks on the number of women in the labor force, for example, were intended simply to report on the extent of a social change that had taken place since the time of the first feminist wave, sixty years ago. I was presenting facts and not feelings; and I think that many of the other women present were doing the same thing, whether they were reporting on their own experience or on someone else's. We were *reporting,* which is a cognitive, not an emotional, act.

Come now to the question of emotions, where I shall of course speak only for myself. If Patricia McLaughlin did feel that I was not fully and solely identifying myself with other women, she is entirely correct. The group I identify with is the

✪ ELIZABETH JANEWAY is a novelist, critic and essayist. Her newest book is *Man's World—Woman's Place: A Social Mythology.*

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whole, damned, bloody human race, which means Lieutenant Calley as well as the people he murdered at My Lai. This is the "we" of me. I will not be less than human in my feeling. I will, of course, work in smaller groups, and have. But I believe that any smaller "we" group has got to deal with the world as made and operated and dreamed by all of us—by humanity. Indeed, I think that the sooner women feel themselves as human beings first, and female creatures afterwards, the better off all of us (yes, humanity and yes, women) will be.

MINA REES: "Women on Women" makes some interesting points and opens up for discussion by the readers of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR a number of confusing questions about the equality of men and women, "an idea whose time has come," as Ms. Rosen described it.

Let me comment first on the points that I found most useful. The distinction between "women's liberation," (viewed as the need to do away with obvious injustices and to secure legislative sanctions for full equality of women before the law) and the "women's movement" (which deals with much more subtle social forces and must continue for a long, long time) seemed to me helpful; and I agree with Ms. Hellman that one of the weaknesses of the movement is that it has not embraced women with sufficiently diverse social and work experiences. Although it is surely true that the women's lib portion of the problem, in many of its aspects—like the liberalization of abortion laws and equal treatment by the criminal law—touches lower-class women at least as powerfully as it touches women of the middle class, I suspect that attitudes toward holding jobs outside the home differ widely between the women porters at a hotel in the Dordogne in France, and Ms. Heilbrun's women colleagues at Columbia. I cannot, myself, make any novel contributions here; and it is likely that the readers of THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR will, like me, be better informed and more interested in the difficulties faced by professional women. But, even within that framework, I find the scope of the panel too narrow, with the participants sharing, to a considerable degree, a similar background, experience and interest. It is, therefore, not surprising that Ms. Walker's contributions had unique value. Her exposition of the special problems of black women was truly enlightening, and I am most grateful for it.

Like all social problems, this one concerning the status of women is far too complex to be dismissed in a simple statement. Thus the nuances of the discussion did add dimension and insight. One of my strong feelings that did not, however, enter the conversation, is a sense of gratitude (in spite of discomfort and impatience with some details) for the many diverse activities in the movement for women's equality and toward the leaders of the varied groups that have been working for the welfare of women. It is through their efforts, and not through some mystic process of maturation, that equitable treatment for women has reached the status of "an idea whose time has come." This has been accompanied by a great variety of gains for all women: the liberalization of abortion laws, tenuous though the victory remains; the appointment of many more women to important posts in government and industry; the recent guidelines adopted by the New York State Board of Regents and other educational policy groups urging that schools and colleges take the lead in providing equal opportunity for women and end abuses in jobs, salaries and educational opportunities—all these are manifestations of the fact that much has changed. Ms. Heilbrun is, of course, right that this does not mean that all men are eagerly seeking a chance to give women preference over men or are even welcoming them as full equals. But there is no doubt in my mind that in business and nonprofit organizations as

✪ MINA REES became president emeritus of the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York this fall. The first woman ever elected to the presidency of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, she is now chairman of its board of directors.

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well as in universities, where the heavy hand of H.E.W. must be credited with some force, women are being given a fairer opportunity to compete.

From my own point of view, the outstanding need is close to Ms. Hellman's observation that the question is, "Where does dignity lie?" For me the matter of central importance is that our society should be so changed that little girls have the same opportunity for fulfillment in their lives that little boys have. And by fulfillment I mean the fulfillment of their intellectual, personal, emotional and social potential. I think it is important that our mores and all our attitudes and procedures be so changed that girls are encouraged to choose their careers on the basis of their abilities and interests, and not because some activities are stereotyped for girls; that education be open and that girls have the same freedom of choice that boys have; that fictions about the physical or intellectual or emotional limitations of women not be permitted to cloud the issue and introduce irrelevancies; and that girls be brought up in a society that provides reasonable models so that their aspirations are not dampened before they have a chance to flourish.

These are the points emphasized by the New York Board of Regents last spring when they formulated educational guidelines:

1. Priority should be given to the appointment of qualified women as superintendents, principals, college presidents, and deans, and they should be paid as well as men doing equal work.
2. Textbooks should not be used if they depict men and women in sexually stereotyped roles, and courses must be revised to give a balanced account of women's contributions to civilization.
3. Counselors should encourage women to enter fields previously open only to males.
4. Admissions quotas for women should be ended at coeducational colleges and universities, and special programs for women whose education was interrupted by marriage should be provided.

Although the atmosphere has changed markedly within the past few years, the problems addressed in these guidelines will be with us for a long time. I hope that it will be with increasing infrequency that women have experiences like some I had years ago when I overheard a senior administrator saying to his colleague, "I wonder what man's job she has," and when I participated in a conference at which the head of a technical activity said to his chief engineer, "What are we doing discussing these questions with a woman?"

In the future a variety of life-styles should be open to women as well as to men. But women will need to acknowledge that, with their husbands, they must make decisions about childbearing and rearing, and arrange their lives so that the toll taken in energy is one that they are prepared and able to bear.

I have not addressed myself explicitly to "What do we lose?" because it seems to me that that subject has been pursued beyond the point of useful return. I confess I was surprised that so much could be said about it. My own position is that the situations of different women are so diverse that the answer to this question must be left open; that there are, indeed, situations in which married women will be forced to make choices between different things they want, and that their choices may well prove to be more difficult than their husbands'. For unmarried women, it seems to me that very little of importance will be lost. But for all women as well as for all men, a difficult new perception of the social milieu in which they operate must be attained. Perhaps THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR can provide help for its readers as they seek a new apprehension of the changing requirements of dignity, courtesy and fair play, if women are to be welcomed into full participation in the frustrations and achievements of our society.

The Editors wish to apologize for the word "vile" in Ann Birstein's remarks on page 604 of the Autumn issue. It appeared through an editorial error.

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SIGHTINGS

How Not to Film a Novel

CHARLES THOMAS SAMUELS

Partly because it is easier to borrow than to devise narrative material, partly because producers like to invest in what has already proven itself, partly because the forms are similar, movies have often been adapted from fiction. Unless a fictional source is reconceived for the screen, however, bringing it there involves little more art than is demonstrated when one arranges a harpsichord piece to be played on the guitar.

Distributed rather than translated by filming, most fiction is also thereby reduced. Our culture is strewn with the flesh of great novels rotting away as nonreaders march to local movie houses to see the narrative bones reassembled. But even lesser books are disintegrated. The venality that sends filmmakers to fiction is usually accompanied by laziness. Books are exploited not only for a story line on which to hang visuals or as a known commodity to attract ticket-buyers but also as a substitute for all art save the technical one of transcription.

Such parasitism has lately been encouraged. Commercial novelists now write in hopes of movie sales, since few people buy books anymore; more serious writers, influenced by the fashionable aesthetic of the *nouveau roman,* avoid interpretation and analysis as being falsely anthropomorphic. Yet even novels that emulate cinematic objectivity are saturated with interpretation, because words, in which fiction must be written, are discursive mental constructs. Pictures, on the other hand, can be wholly representational, and if a filmmaker expresses meaning principally through language, he is violating the genius of the medium. Only by means of eloquent images and expressive visual or aural transitions (with words in an ancillary role), can a film be both meaningful and cinematic.

But since fiction is adapted from motives of ease and security, visual eloquence, which requires effort, is rarely attempted. Most filmed novels are illustrated paraphrases, with setting and characters pictured, and theme rendered through dialogue. *Fat City* exemplifies both this method and its cost.

A flatly circumstantial story of two boxers—one, near thirty and oblivion; the other, young and starting his career—Leonard Gardner's novel intercuts these lives as if by parallel editing. Also cinematic is its emphasis on physical detail, its action milieu, and the sort of banal dialogue that can be spoken unobtrusively.

Furthermore, since the novel fails to show how or why its principal characters wind up in "fat city" (argot for "out of condition" as well as for a loser's vain dreams), it appeared destined to benefit from filming, because documentation is an effect more convincing in film than in fiction, as well as being more appropriate to the form. But while Gardner, who adapted his book, and John Huston, the director, have reproduced much of the original, they haven't taken pains to include what gave the novel its effectiveness.

Accretion of detail makes the book's points. *Fat City* depicts not only Billy Tully and the newcomer, Ernie Munger, but a

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host of lesser characters, some evident for no more than a sentence or paragraph. The heroes' squalid situations are thus made parts of a general condition. As a result, the absence of explanation is less bothersome: if everyone we see is down and out, why wonder about what ruined Billy or Ernie? Mistakenly, the film thins out this dense human backdrop.

The resulting loss of significance is clearest in the depiction of love. In the novel, Billy constantly compares his affair with the barfly, Oma, to his unsuccessful marriage, which, in turn, is compared to the affair, ending in marriage, of Ernie and Faye. The men's manager, Ruben Luna, is also a marital casualty, as we see when he muses about the "thick, wide, fierce lips that had once excited him" and the "plump cheeks creased where there had once been dimples," belonging to his now old and unresponsive wife. The film eliminates Luna's unhappiness, reduces Tully's past to a few references, and drastically cuts the tormented progress of Ernie's courtship and marriage. The emphasis on disappointment in love, which is one of the chief elements of the condition "fat city," almost disappears.

Yet the book's meaning depends on facts like the following: Ernie "had begun taking [Faye] out because for a time she had gone with Steve Bonomo, whose success with a previous girl Ernie had read about on the wall of a high school lavatory." Women as a conventionalized symbol of status and their unfitness for so emblematic a role go far toward explaining the malaise shared by all the novel's male characters. The loss of some filmic equivalent for a passage like the following is a loss not only of atmosphere but of Gardner's vision of his subject:

> Then the man began to sing, repeating a single phrase, his voice rising from bass moans and bellows to falsetto wails. *Earth Angel, Earth Angel, will you be mine?* The song went on in the locker room, the singer, as he put on his clothes, shifting to an interlude of improvisation: *Baby, baaaby, baaaaby, uh baby, uuh, oh yeauh,* BAAAAAAABY, I WANT *you,* while naked figures walked to and from the showers and steam drifted through the doorway. Drawing on his pants, Ernie, bruised, fatigued and elated, felt he had joined the company of men.

The laconic distillation evident in such a passage is what allows Gardner's novel to be naturalistically circumstantial without the boring superabundance of naturalism. Yet what the book sketches through its background is so diminished by the film that speechifying must often make the author's points. One sees this in the single major alteration of the novel: a final scene invented by Gardner (and by Huston?) to replace the novel's more suggestive ending.

Leaving Tully in total dereliction, the novel fades out on Ernie, who is hitching back to Stockton after a successful bout in Salt Lake City, which has filled him with elation despite his meager fifty-dollar winnings. One of the two girls who picks him up seems potentially responsive when he begins to nuzzle her cheek. Suddenly, however, she gets angry and tells him to get out. Ernie protests being dumped in the desert, but the girl insists. Getting another ride takes some time, and he is forced to make the last lap of his journey by bus. Arriving in Stockton, "feeling in himself the potent allegiance of fate," he passes through a lobby, "where unkempt sleepers slumped upright on the benches."

This scene exemplifies Gardner's representational style. Ernie's consciousness doesn't register the portents suggested either by the woman's rejection or by the bums' presence, although events in the novel make us certain that they, not pugilistic triumph, are the fate that dogs him. But the film, whose atmosphere is much sparser, must spell things out. Thus a final meeting is contrived in which Tully accuses Ernie of being "soft at the center." Then the men go to a poolroom-bar, where they order coffee from an ancient oriental, whose appearance provides Tully with an occasion to talk about the tragedy of it all. Turning to look at some cardplayers, Tully's image freezes, while silence abruptly descends. He has, we are meant to feel, seen God knows what horror! Shaken, he asks Ernie to stick around, and the film ends.

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Embarrassingly blatant, this is also false to the characters. Essential to Tully is the unreflectiveness that makes one vulnerable to circumstance. Nor does his attack on Ernie fit either his or the young man's behavior. The freeze frames pictorialize some epiphany, but what can he have learned? Tully's condition is qualitatively constant throughout the film. Indeed, unalterability is the essence of his misfortune.

The film duplicates structure, setting, and dialogue; but with a frugal presentation of background, it also needs rhetoric to convey meaning and thus betrays the book's spirit. Rare instances in which Huston tries to be visually expressive are equally traitorous.

Two examples: Tully accidentally meets Oma, who drunkenly chronicles her misspent life. She confesses that her second husband had "unnatural desires," as Huston keeps the camera on Tully. Visibly, the man is excited by lust, but the point of his affair in the novel is that Tully drifted into it because Oma's scolding reminded him of his wife. What the novel shows as another example of the trapping repetitiveness of loser psychology is turned by the film into a cute—but irrelevant—randiness.

A more disruptive error occurs in the otherwise well-staged fight scene between Tully and Lucero. Prior to the bout, we learned that the Mexican is also a wounded man; in his case, literally: he urinates blood. Hence the fight becomes graphic proof of the ubiquity of "fat city." Nor can defeat really be vanquished. Tully wins only through a T.K.O., which, in his dazed condition, he can barely understand, and he gets only one hundred dollars for his ordeal in the ring. When he goes to Lucero to offer consolation, they appear not as victor and loser but as battered men hugging one another in pain.

Midway in this scene, however, Huston focuses on Tully's eyes, when the man sits being tended in his corner. As in the ending, this moment implies a portentous realization, but we cannot imagine what Tully is thinking; and, in any case, it is false to imply that his problem is visibly distinct. (If in this shot Huston meant to show that Tully is dazed, he may be accused of blatancy inappropriate to his film's more prevalent style of understatement.) In this and other moments of adventitious drama Huston is shouting or winking at the audience because he doesn't know how to command our attention through eloquent detail.

Eloquence is only present—occasionally—in photographer Conrad Hall's lighting: a long shot that shows Ernie crossing before the dazzling clapboard of Luna's gym—the novice entering "the big time"; or the green gray haze of the boxing arena abruptly vanishing when incandescent bulbs come on to expose the spectacle's sordid sweatiness; or the image of Tully entering a bar that shows as livid black and white against the sun and so instantly makes us feel the interior deadness.

Paucity of detail, erroneous visualization and obtrusive rhetoric also mar the cinematic translation of James Dickey's *Deliverance* (like *Fat City,* adapted by its author). But since Dickey's book is richer and more ambitious than Gardner's, this story is made to seem even more underdeveloped.

Like its source, the film version of *Deliverance* mixes psychological and ethical speculation with a barely credible adventure from the world of pulp fiction. Three middle-class, middle-aged men, drawn by the superman mystique of a fourth, take a canoe trip down a wild stretch of river that is soon due for taming into an artificial lake. In passage, they encounter challenges from nature (raging rapids, capsizing torrents, unscalable cliffs that must be scaled) and from man (sodomy and the need to commit self-defensive murder). One voyager loses his life, another his dignity, and the leader his leg; but the hero gains in skill and cunning, although he forfeits some of his morality.

The first problem with *Deliverance* is the plot, which Dickey recognized to be preposterous, so that the novel, to disarm criticism, repeatedly acknowledges that its action is as incredible as what one finds in movies. The movie, ironically, takes everything straight, with the result that events become doubly incredible. Chief among them is the rape scene. Sodomy hardly

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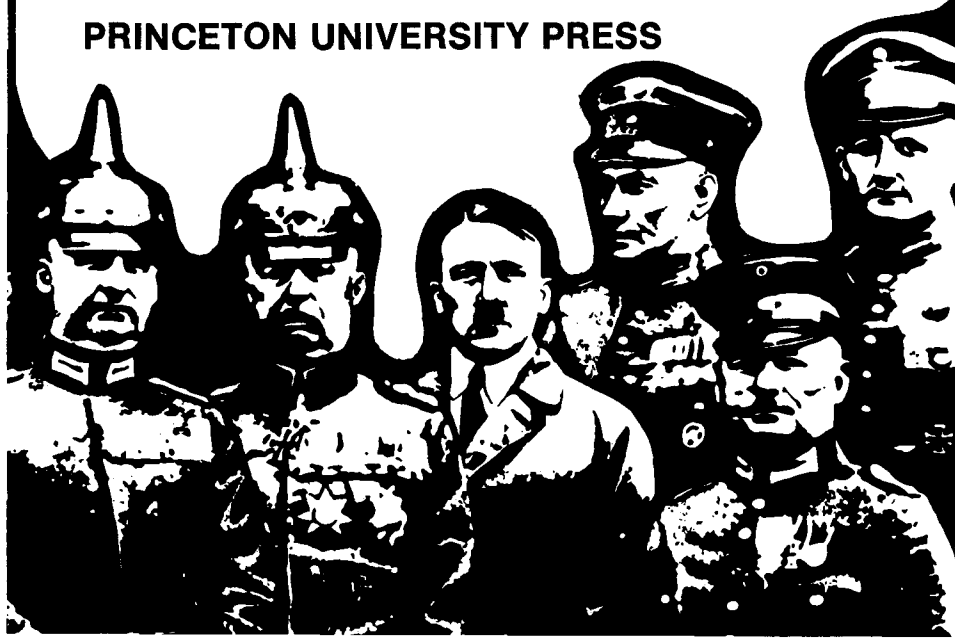

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seems the most likely threat awaiting Sunday woodsmen, but it is even less believable to see than to read about. Why hillbillies should seek pelt rather than pelf is a question made all the more clamorous by director John Boorman's lengthening of the scene in his adaptation. Moreover, by casting the role of middle-aged average Ed Gentry with the too-young, too-handsome Jon Voight and the rapist's victim with the too-fat, too-vulgar Ned Beatty, Boorman adds puzzlement about the hillbilly's taste to wonderment about his behavior.

Equally destructive of credibility is the manner in which Boorman stages the threat posed by the landscape (it is also boring: repeated shots of canoes running the rapids). In the crucial scene where Voight scales the cliff, for example, Boorman elects to compress and shorten the ordeal by means of interior dissolves. Unfortunately, this reminds us that no human could perform this feat without interruption, hence it could not be photographed in a long take. But this also throws away the suspense (brilliantly evoked by Dickey's prose in the relevant passage) that only a long, continuous climb could inspire.

But the film's errors in visualization are nothing compared to its failure to represent Dickey's meaning. As I argued in the *New Republic* (April 18, 1970), *Deliverance* makes sense only if we regard its narrator-hero as someone afraid to understand what has happened to him. Ample evidence in the novel indicates suppressed homosexual longing on Gentry's part for the muscular, risk-taking Lewis Medlock. What the hillbillies do to their victim, Gentry would do to his idol, were he not prevented by psychological inhibition. Without the presumption that males fear latent homosexuality, the novel's events seem unmotivated. Why else does Medlock conclude that the hillbilly is bent on rape even though he can't see him? Why else is Gentry so willing to hide Bobby's shame and bury his attacker? Fear of homosexual desire also explains Gentry's developing hatred of the victim, a hatred that ultimately becomes almost murderous. Saved by surrogates from having to act out his dangerous passion, Gentry nonetheless assuages the envy of Medlock's masculinity that inspired desire. Delivered from perversion, he delivers the others from danger, thus proving himself even more manly than Medlock. The latter loses his leg in their ordeal, so that Gentry's final triumph includes Medlock's symbolic castration.

One could hardly expect producer-director John Boorman to capture this theme in a film aimed at an audience whose tolerance for man's homosexual component is likely to be no less troubled than Gentry's. Unsurprisingly, then, he cuts out the pre-trip section, which makes the book's erotic orientation unmistakable. Similarly, he eliminates the eroticizing of apparently neutral actions (in the book, even scaling the cliff is compared to intercourse). But since Dickey's novel is comprehensible only in terms of its sexual nuances, Boorman's attempt to pitch things at the book's more public level was perhaps doomed from the outset.

Nonetheless, the film bowdlerizes more than it needed to. Gone, along with the erotic descriptions of man merging with nature, are even such innocent details as the heat of the sun, the way in which canoe seats cut civilized flesh, and such brilliant episodes—all eminently cinematic—as the horrible chicken's head, refuse from a factory, which the men find floating in the river, or the owl that invades Gentry's tent. As a result, the trip is made more monotonous and less frightening than in the novel. Replacing Dickey's portents, Boorman invents visual clichés (like the full moon in an angry sky before the rape scene) or facile ironies (like the rainbow after it).

Far worse is the film's attempt to render Dickey's apparent message about man against the wilderness. As in the novel, this seems imposed rhetoric, although it is even more disjunctive here. The script is full of inflated dialogue, made doubly ludicrous when spoken by the muscle-bound Burt Reynolds, as Medlock: "Machines are gonna fail and the system is gonna fail. Then survival. Who has the ability to survive. That's the name of the game: survival." Or: "Sometimes you have to lose yourself before you can find anything."

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As in *Fat City,* such dialogue indicates a failure to make events speak for themselves. But, as I've said, unless taken as a censored fantasy, the events in *Deliverance* are both incredible and obscure.

Medlock planned the journey because he believes that man is himself only when meeting the challenge of the wilderness. Thus the damming of the river is one more sign that modern society threatens man with emasculation. But, contradictorily, emasculation takes place because the characters leave civilization; and nature, although the occasion for tests of strength, only becomes so because the hillbillies have turned the trip into an invitation to lawlessness. We might take *Deliverance* as a critique of Medlock's code, but the action puts us wholly on the side of an understandable will to survive horrors. Hence we can't tell whether the tenderfeet have been improved or brutalized by their experience. Moreover, the relationship between hillbillies and nature is obscure: savage and unmodern though they are, the country people are not natural phenomena.

Instead of clearing up such contradictions or ambiguities, the film emphasizes them. For example, the movie begins with shots of bulldozers while Medlock is heard philosophizing about the majesty of nature. Near the end, when Gentry is lying his way out of the crime, Boorman makes him and us see the pathetic image of a church being moved to make way for the lake, its bell tolling as if in judgment. Both details suggest that progress is culpable and that a valuable heritage is being destroyed. But the hill people haven't been shown in an admirable light, and civilization has scarcely been shown at all. All we've witnessed are two lustful and cretinous backwoodsmen and some men like ourselves with whom we are in total sympathy in their desire for deliverance.

As in *Fat City,* the book's ending is altered for greater drama, but the result only adds further confusion. At fade-out Gentry is seen in bed, awakened by a nightmare vision of the dead hillbilly rising from the lake. If we are to take Gentry's success in murdering with impunity as a sign of moral deterioration, what are we to make of this manifestation of troubled conscience? But if we claim that conscience sets civilized man above nature and the savages, what are we to make of all those nasty bulldozers and the raped church?

Clearly, Boorman was no more concerned about clearing up the plot's significance than Huston was interested in finding a style appropriate to the laconic and representational prose of *Fat City.* Neither man was translating a vision from one medium to another; both were exploiting narrative material so as to be able to make a movie. This practice is as old as Hollywood. Something new has been added, however. The current willingness to regard film as the greatest form of narrative art springs from illiteracy and an avoidance of distinctions, for if the form has done astonishingly well in its short life, time (to say nothing of financial pressure) has kept it from equaling the older art. Yet men who reduce the work of others are not only uncriticized by those ignorant of anything not on celluloid: they are credited almost as if theirs were original achievements. Although John Huston manifestly thinned out what was already a thin (though affecting) novel, *Fat City* is being hailed as his return to the ranks of great directors. In the case of *Deliverance,* John Boorman has even been congratulated for having improved on Dickey's book (see Stephen Farber in the *New York Times,* August 20, 1972).

It is not as if we lacked relevant comparisons. Great films have been made from fiction: one thinks of the Bresson versions of Bernanos, of Truffaut's best work, or of the Joseph Heifetz adaptation of Chekhov's *Lady with a Dog.* Occasionally an indifferent novel becomes a brilliant film: think of what Stanley Kubrick did by turning Peter George's conventional thriller *Red Alert* into *Dr. Strangelove* or of how Carol Reed made his version of Conrad's *Outcast of the Islands* more masterly than the original. In such films, the book is reseen, its essentials translated into specifically cinematic terms. Far more frequent, unfortunately, are movies like *Fat City* and *Deliverance,* which cut their sources down to the length and expressive dimensions of a mere movie.

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The Revolving Bookstand

Professor and Student: Moral Inconsistency and the Failure of Nerve

KENNETH B. CLARK

THE RISE OF THE UNMELTABLE ETHNICS. *By Michael Novak. Macmillan. $7.95.*
ON LEARNING AND SOCIAL CHANGE. *By Michael Rossman. Random House. $10. Paper, $2.45.*

Professor Michael Novak's *The Rise of the Unmeltable Ethnics* and Michael Rossman's *On Learning and Social Change* would seem to be unlikely candidates for review in the same essay. Professor Novak has attempted to write a serious tour de force or apologia explaining the social, cultural and political dynamics of "white ethnics" in America. Michael Rossman apologizes for writing his book—"books were for us a distinctly secondary source of knowledge"—which attempts to present the rationale of the student revolt in the colleges in the late 1960s and the theory and procedure for the "liberation of education" from its stagnant totalitarianism and social sterility. The subject matter of each book seems quite different although the styles are peculiarly similar. On the surface this similarity in style seems odd since Michael Novak is a professor of philosophy and religious studies at the State University of New York at Old Westbury, while Michael Rossman is an admitted leader of the student radical movement whose rebellion against the nature, structure and demands of higher education in America impelled him to leave college and to reject his primary academic interest in mathematics.

As one reads these books, however, with the seriousness demanded by the decision to review them, one becomes increasingly impressed with their curious similarities; but even more important, one becomes aware, almost to the point of a striking revelation, of the way in which each book unintentionally reflects an important aspect of the total pattern of moral, educational, intellectual and political crises of our times. Professor Novak's book is a tirade. Mr. Rossman's book is also a tirade. Each book has identified its respective devils who are responsible for the present problems and difficulties of our society. This demoniac approach to the understanding of complex problems of human interaction is sustained by the verbal drama of studied overstatement which leaves little room for rational debate. The pipeline to God is sufficient to identify devils and effective techniques for their castigation. Both books deal with complex social and educational problems with sweeping generalizations that are designed to project convictions but that fail to mask restrictive dogmatisms. Each book in its own way reveals the author's lack of compassion for the predicament of those human beings with whom he does not now identify; at the same time each author demonstrates the not uncommon human capacity to rationalize and obscure the frailties of those with whom he identifies.

For Professor Novak the major devils are the WASPs who inflict feelings of inferiority and guilt upon ethnics by telling them

✪ KENNETH CLARK, director of the Metropolitan Applied Research Center, is on the Editorial Board of the SCHOLAR. His most recent book is *A Possible Reality*.

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"what they ought to be." While WASPs are not specifically defined, ethnics are defined as "those descendants of the immigrants of Southern and Western Europe: Poles, Italians, Greeks, and Slavs. These include, of course, Armenians, Lebanese . . . Slovenes, Ruthenians, Croats, Serbs, Czechs (Bohemians and Moravians), Slovaks, Lithuanians, Estonians, Russians, Spanish and Portuguese." According to Professor Novak, the WASP devils persist in depriving the essentially powerless ethnics of the sense of their own dignity, integrity and identity. According to this perspective, WASPs who control the power in America are insensitive to the cultural and family richness brought to America by ethnics, and seek to destroy their ethnic values by imposing demands for Americanization upon them. Throughout his book, Professor Novak asserts and implies that WASPs also impose upon ethnics demands for the acceptance of racial desegregation in American institutions. He argues further—and, for some, probably persuasively—that the diabolic, antiethnic demands imposed by WASPs are made all the more oppressive by the fact that the WASPs themselves, because of their superior social and economic status, are immune to any direct association with blacks in their residential areas and in their schools.

The secondary devils identified and flagellated by Professor Novak are intellectuals.

> . . . intellectuals do not love "middle America." . . . the ethnics do not like or trust, or even understand the intellectuals.

Unfortunately, these quotes are not taken out of context. They reflect all too accurately the tone and the intellectual vision of a professor of philosophy and religious studies. Reading his sweeping rejection of intellectuals, one is not always clear whether Novak's definition of intellectuals is restricted only to WASPs or includes also those intellectuals who, through the process of educational mobility, have their origins in those groups who are classed by the author as ethnics. Novak, however, is quite careful not to include Jewish intellectuals among his intellectual devils. Jews—and to some extent Irish and Germans—are exempted from the perfidy of an intellectual WASP-dominated American society. As a disturbing example of the extreme depths to which such a polarizing, passion dominated, stereotyped form of thinking can propel even a trained mind, one finds Professor Novak asserting:

> Was Agnew so wrong, then, when he detected "an effete corps of impudent snobs"? Did he anger people by a calumny or by thudding an arrow into a bull's eye?

Jewish intellectuals are discussed almost entirely in terms of the author's views of Norman Mailer's views. Fortunately, Professor Novak finds no black intellectual either intellectual enough or worthy enough to be subjected to his sweeping analysis and categorical rejection. He reserves for blacks a type of sermonizing that he asserts should not be inflicted upon ethnics. He explains patronizingly, and with questionable relevance, that American ethnics "don't begrudge the blacks' gains; but they smell something very *unfair*. On television, blacks are wealthier and smoother than the ones workers meet every day."

A book that is characterized by sweeping generalizations, polemic, and the polarization of groups of human beings necessarily must be filled with contradictions. The contradictions in Professor Novak's book are almost as numerous as are his generalizations. It is not quite clear whether Professor Novak's attempt to differentiate between political and criminal violence is or is not an example of one of his most disturbing contradictions. What is unfortunately clear is that he does ascribe political violence to ethnics while he reserves the more primitive form of criminal violence to blacks. This book parades, if not flaunts, and attempts to justify, the hostilities between groups of white Americans and blacks, yet at the same time proclaims that "lower class ethnics and blacks . . . are allies." The author who writes

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against any preaching and moralizing directed toward white ethnics, also writes in the same book:

> Generations of injustice to blacks have created special problems of leadership, instability, and ideological heedlessness; these cannot be wished away. But those who suffer [presumably white ethnics] for these political deficiencies among blacks cannot be blamed for wishing to take up arms in self-defense, for wishing to crush the offenders thoroughly. . . .

This quote does in fact come directly from a professor of philosophy and religious studies at an accredited university in America.

As one turns from these reflections on Professor Novak's book, one becomes more understanding, although no more accepting, of Michael Rossman's at times incoherent, anguished stream of ideas. One becomes better able to understand the curious lack of compassion—or more accurately, the desperate struggle for an elusive compassion—in Rossman's book. This lack of compassion is seen more clearly and is much more dangerous in Professor Novak. The phenomenon of selective or restrictive compassion is without question more dangerous in teachers than in students. It is educationally infectious and contagious. One is better able to understand the paradox of Rossman's condescension toward the very students whom he seeks to liberate educationally. In his quest to free them from the limitations of authoritarian teachers and totalitarian institutions, he robs them of their individuality. He denies them the right to make their own choices and to pursue the quest for understanding, truth, justice and serenity within the disciplines of ideas which imperfect man has collected, stored and lost throughout the centuries required to develop the necessary restraints of a civilization. Rossman calls his fellow students names if they seek to pursue ideas and dialogues with others in terms that he has rejected. He demands that his peers struggle—but only on his terms—with the awesome problems of defining affirmatively a transitory self and of searching for the role of human intelligence in reducing to a tolerable state the embarrassments inherent in the human predicament. His peers must "make a theater of our experience" on a nonstage—proclaimed, not constructed, by him. He and his associates will then become the self-proclaimed directors and the God-chosen improvisers.

One can better understand this if one understands the dogmatism, the condescension, that is pervasive throughout Professor Novak's book. Novak not only rejects the humanity of WASPs, intellectuals and blacks. He rejects the humanity, the dignity, the individuality, of the white ethnics whom he purports to explain and defend. The reader is told what ethnics like or dislike. "Ethnic Americans respect strength and despise weakness." In fact, Novak makes a seemingly persuasive case for the belief that white ethnics are in fact more prejudiced than are other people. The illusion of homogeneity which he creates for ethnics is at the expense of the reality of individual differences. One cannot rationally believe that all ethnics are coerced into a patently antidemocratic stance in regard to other, particularly darkskinned, minorities. One cannot psychologically believe that the various groups included in Novak's definition of ethnics do in fact perceive and react to the threats of other deprived human beings with a common hostility. One must reject the pervasive implication in Professor Novak's book that ethnics are a special breed of human beings who are more susceptible to reacting to threats by overt hostility or belabored rationalizations of their guilt and aggressions. This is as true of imperfect human beings as it is among ethnics. Just as Rossman betrays a subtle prejudice against his fellow students, so Novak betrays a flagrant prejudice and rejection of his fellow human beings.

The most obvious devil for Rossman is the devil of American educational institutions. As a former leader of the Free Speech Movement in Berkeley in 1964, he sees American universities as they now exist as instruments of destruction and dehumanization deforming and destroying

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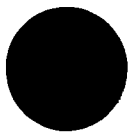

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the integrity and creativity of their students. Closely related to this primary devil are the secondary demons of rational thought, intellectual discipline and the academic etiquette that respects both the freedom of individuals to seek truth through trial and error, and the politically protected right of an individual to express ideas—and to counter ideas—even if one differs with them.

One tends to read Rossman's indictment of American education, and particularly higher education, with mixed feelings. There are valid criticisms which the young and others can make and have made of these institutions and the total American educational process. Too frequently the essence of academic life has been presented to the young in terms of an isolation from the pervasive and inescapable problems of social morality and justice. Students have not been helped enough to understand the necessity of using knowledge, intelligence and reason as instruments for enhancing the positives in the human experience and interaction. Those young people who have objected to colleges and universities defining academic prestige primarily in terms of the rigid isolation of human intelligence from ethical concerns seem to me to be not only justified in their criticism, but long delayed and too vague. The pervasive assertion that American colleges and universities have defaulted in not providing young people with those ethical imperatives that would make human intelligence an advantage rather than a detriment, cannot be brushed aside as the rantings of rebellious youth. American education can be indicted justifiably for its failure to search rationally and systematically for a formula that would integrate moral and ethical concerns into the totality of the rational intellectual process—of the sciences, the arts and the humanities. The custodians of our educational institutions, for the most part, seem to have chosen the easier and safer role of washing their hands of the complex and difficult problem of helping young minds and society to come to grips with the need to design and use moral gyroscopes if human intelligence is to be used constructively. We have defaulted; we have seriously handicapped our youths and our society as we have set them adrift in a political and intellectual sea without moral rudders or ethical compasses.

It follows, therefore, that one cannot understand the seeming irrationalities, the rejection of intellectual discipline, the forced and tortured nihilism and the random, and at times anguished, cry for some sort of stabilizing morality of the Michael Rossmans, without at the same time understanding the degree to which Professor Novak and countless other Professor Novaks have defaulted in fulfilling their primary responsibility to their students. Michael Rossman, a socially sensitive young man with an excellent mind, is forced into the role of moral and intellectual mendicant because the Professor Novaks imposed upon him and his equally sensitive peers the unbearable burden of moral relativisin and ethical indifference. For too long American students sat back passively and observed that their professors for the most part were silent in the face of flagrant social and racial inequities. Probably not unrelated was the fact that the bulk of the research funds granted to universities by the government was for military research rather than for research on problems of human interaction.

Although there are a variety of motivations, it is reasonable to believe that many American students revolted and sought mindlessly and self-destructively to destroy educational institutions because they found the moral and ethical sterility of these institutions personally intolerable. One can speculate that the students' rejection of rationality and personal and intellectual discipline stems from deeper concerns of the more sensitive students to test the limits of the genuine convictions of their parents, their teachers, their professors, and probably their priests. One could view this testing of limits as a game, a term that Rossman frequently uses throughout his book. This is a deadly serious game. It is a game involving the search for the essence and the substance that determine the

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meaning of being human. It is a game that risks the tolerable limits of the human predicament. From the point of view of the students, conscious or not, the objectives of this game are to determine and demonstrate by their own experience what are the moral, the ethical, the intellectual values that this society considers important enough to defend and justify in the face of assaults; and to have defined and reaffirmed for them the conditions essential for rational man to continue the tortuous search for truth, justice and human dignity. They were seeking through the theater of confrontation to determine what educators actually believed; what was the necessary courage that gave substance and validity to the life of the intellect and to that inviolable dignity required for one's humanity. Students had a right to know the justifications for the loneliness, the concentration, the risks—and the rewards —of the intellectual life.

As one faculty or group of administrators after another retreated in the face of nonnegotiable, irrational demands, they continued to betray their students. They failed the abrupt and severe tests that their students imposed upon them. They revealed themselves as confused, unclear, ambivalent, without the necessary courage; and above all, they revealed a weakness which made them unworthy of the serious responsibility of being custodians of the values without which there is no real distinction between the human and the animal.

The polemics, the ambivalences, the fundamental moral inconsistencies, and the special pleadings of the Professor Novaks made the confusion of the Michael Rossmans and a free speech movement possible, if not inevitable. These self-reinforcing confusions can only lead to a series of crises of social and political leadership. By weakening the ethical role of education they ensure that those in quest of public office increase their chances of success by appealing to the primitive passions of man. They increase the chances by which the rational and intellectual powers of man become agents for cruelty and inequities—and rationality and morality become verbal rationalizations that pervert democracy in the name of democracy. Under these conditions man becomes the most dangerous of animals because his intelligence continues to function with that lack of empathy essential for humanity.

August 1914: A Beginning

AUGUST 1914. *By Alexander Solzhenitsyn. Translated by Michael Glenny. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.* $10.

Reviewed by JACOB KORG

Solzhenitsyn's courageous assertion of his right to freedom of conscience, and the growing strength and versatility of his work, have set the stage for a climactic ideological and artistic event, but *August 1914* does not quite fulfill the role its moment has assigned to it. It contains no social protest of the kind found in Solzhenitsyn's earlier novels, although his independence of mind is fully evident in its non-Marxist approach to history; and while this book amply displays his talent, it is not, on the whole, stronger than his earlier work.

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JACOB KORG is a member of the English department at the University of Washington, Seattle. He is the author of *George Gissing: A Critical Biography, Dylan Thomas,* and *The Force of Few Words.*

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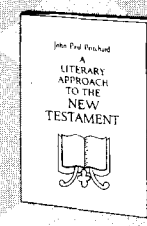

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an intimate, detailed treatment of his thoughts and behavior as he goes about his usual activities, then moves on to some other person who may have little or no relation to the first. It is a delicate Chekhovian mode, spare, deft and vigorous, which sorts the essentials of spiritual experience out of miscellaneous everyday events with impressive accuracy. Little by little, a panoramic view of a whole society begins to take form. The war has just started and is far away, but Solzhenitsyn skillfully shows how it has begun to affect the quality of life in barely perceptible ways. A wife who has quarreled with her husband hopes that this time he will be the one to seek a reconciliation; after all, he may soon be called into service.

Most of *August 1914* is occupied with the Battle of Tannenberg, where the Russians suffered their first serious defeat. Solzhenitsyn has undertaken to give a definitive account of the actions of several large units of the Russian army during the ten days of the battle, following strategic developments in great detail on an hour-by-hour basis. These actions are often skillfully integrated into the lives of the characters, but Solzhenitsyn's effort to give a quasi-professional chronicle of troop movements, logistical problems, staff decisions, and the like, produces masses of information that are little more than technical historical annotations, and that fail to engage moral or dramatic issues. These passages read less like a novel than like *The Collapse of the Third Republic* or *The Guns of August,* which, incidentally, covers in nineteen pages the battle to which Solzhenitsyn devotes more than four hundred.

There are other difficulties in the narrative of the battle (the major part of the novel), which cannot be blamed on Solzhenitsyn's historical intentions. His battlefield figures, unlike his civilians, drift into triteness. The virtuous peasant soldiers, the rigid bureaucratic generals, the pious and well-intentioned commander defeated by the System, and the naïve cadet officer surprised by his emotions are recognizable derivations from Tolstoy. Even worse, Solzhenitsyn's protagonist, Colonel Vorotyntsev, is a painful tin soldier who leads his men with perfect courage and intelligence, sees all the mistakes the generals are making, and at the end of the novel looks the General Staff in the eye and delivers a ringing denunciation of its incompetence. He has none of the marvelous fallibility of spirit that made Nerzhin of *The First Circle* and Kostoglotov of *Cancer Ward* recognizable fellow creatures.

Solzhenitsyn's use of an impersonal chronicle style for much of his story is especially puzzling in light of the fact that *August 1914,* like his earlier novels, emphasizes individual moral responsibility, and voices a distrust of collectivism and determinist theories of history. In one of the wonderful scenes in which a definitive movement of the spirit is exhibited, a nurse obsessed with her own disappointment in love overhears a battle conference. She becomes aware that the strategists are interpreting events according to their own wishes, in a way that will justify their cowardice. Suddenly she sees that war is not an impersonal force outside human control, but is governed by "evil will" of the kind she senses among these men. She understands that the suffering of the wounded and dying men around her is willfully caused and unnecessary, and feels for the first time that her own unhappiness is trivial.

This stress on personal conscience is supported by Solzhenitsyn's history professor, who tells her students that life is not fully determined by environment, but is also a function of individual moral awareness, and by his engineer, who analyzes Russia's troubles by saying that the handful of practical-minded people who want to improve things by getting something done are crushed between zealots of the right and the left. Revolution, he says, "is a long and insane process of destruction" that interferes with the rational organization of society. His point is illustrated by the Battle of Tannenberg in which the skill and devotion of clear-minded men like Vorotyntsev are undermined by the timidity and incompetence of a stupid military bureaucracy.

It is not hard to see why the Soviets

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should object to *August 1914*. Solzhenitsyn apparently intends to dramatize the Russian revolution according to non-Marxist principles. He shows very little sympathy with those of his characters who express standard revolutionary ideas.

If *August 1914* is prevented from being a great novel by Solzhenitsyn's overzealous preoccupation with technical military detail, it nevertheless gives the reader a clear sense that he is in the presence of a master storyteller and an awesome moral consciousness. The project Solzhenitsyn has begun here may well turn out to be a classic work. Much depends, I think, on his willingness to drop the chronicle style and turn to what he does best, the depiction of ordinary people trying to cope with the complexities of their souls and the hostility of the external world. The parts of *August 1914* that deal with specific people, rather than with troops and trains of supply wagons, show that the true reality of warfare, and indeed, of history generally, is not patterned or schematic, but consists of the events that register themselves most deeply in the feelings of individual witnesses. These disclose a kind of historical truth inaccessible to official historians, which Solzhenitsyn, with his passion for fact on the one hand, and his sympathy with vulnerable, troubled human beings on the other, is eminently capable of rendering.

That Sense of a Journey Well Taken

THE CHILDREN OF PRIDE: A True Story of Georgia and the Civil War. *Edited by Robert Manson Myers. Yale University Press. $19.95.*

Reviewed by W. W. ABBOT

Charles Colcock Jones was a Southern slave owner who devoted much of his life to the instruction of Negro slaves in Christian doctrine and principles. Born in Georgia and educated in New England, he became a distinguished Presbyterian minister and scholar. In 1853 he returned to Liberty County on the Georgia coast where he managed his three plantations until his death in 1863. He was a man of strong intellect and character, remarkably pure in spirit, with a gentle wit and loving heart. As his own health steadily worsened in the 1850s and the society of which he was an admirable product moved toward its destruction, Jones was surrounded and sustained by an intricate network of relatives and friends, nearly all of whom were living in low-country Georgia or once had. These "connections" of the Reverend C. C. Jones—his wife, two sons and a daughter; daughters-in-law, a son-in-law and grandchildren; an aged aunt, a sister, cousins, nieces, nephews, brothers-in-law, sisters-in-law, neighbors and old friends—are the Children of Pride who gradually reveal themselves in this volume, page by page and year by year, for nearly two thousand pages and over a period of fourteen years.

The friends and relatives of the Reverend Mr. Jones were forever writing letters. They wrote to him and he to them and they to one another. And they all saved their letters. Some six thousand of them have survived. Of these, about twelve hundred written between 1854 and 1868 are printed here in chronological sequence without comment. There is also a preface and a prologue, an epilogue, a full index and an indispensable appendix containing biographical sketches of nearly one thousand persons named in the correspondence. Despite its heft and rather forbidding format, the volume is not just another worthy tome and useful compendium. It is a real book, a book to be read. Furthermore, it will always have its share of readers, next year and fifty years from now.

There are a number of reasons why this collection of family papers immediately takes its place on that relatively short shelf of really good firsthand accounts of life in America. To begin with, it is a superb historical document, of particular importance for anyone interested in the antebellum South or the American Civil War. Granted that no experienced historian of the period

✪ W. W. ABBOT is chairman of the history department at the University of Virginia.

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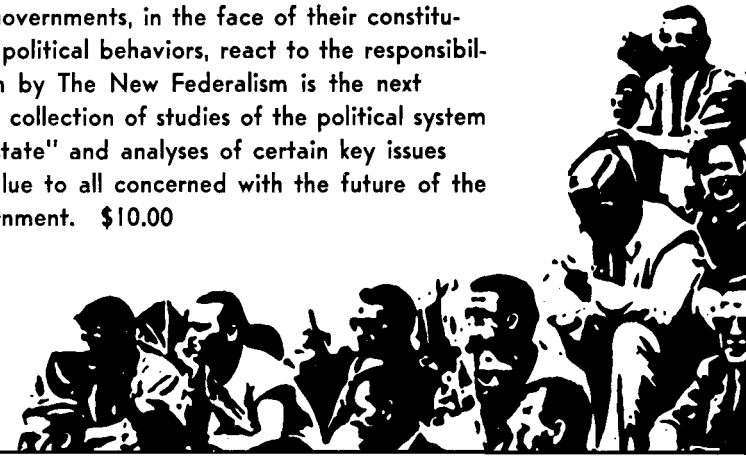

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is likely to turn up any startling news in the letters. He already knows, for instance, that there were good and reasonable men in the American South who owned slaves and defended slavery; that whatever the old master's expectations, the slave freed by Sherman's army preferred freedom to slavery; that if Sherman's troops were not all cruel brutes, even less were they all considerate gentlemen. Nevertheless, the historian, like any other reader of these letters, will find himself drawn into a world that existed for a time in a place; and at the very least he will come away from the book with a better understanding of, or greater doubts about, what he already knew.

This is not a book primarily for historians or history buffs, however. It is for anyone who has ever lost himself in a long, slow-paced novel of character and of manners. The first letter, a fine one written by Jones to his son at Harvard describing a day in the life of Mrs. Jones, will ensnare the susceptible reader at the outset. Three or four hundred pages later, after he has read hundreds of letters and consulted Mr. Myers's remarkable "Who's Who" scores of times, he will have become acquainted with nearly everyone in the Jones circle and will understand pretty well their relationships to one another. Having come this far—having got C. C. Jones, Jr., back from Cambridge and into law practice in Savannah, his sister Mary Sharpe married to the Reverend Robert Mallard of Liberty County, and his brother Joseph settled for the moment at Franklin College in Athens and launched on what promises to be a brilliant scientific career in medicine; having buried the first Buttolph child and just learned that a second is expected, secured a new preacher for the Robarts cousins in Marietta, and pulled sister-in-law Jane Jones in Rome through what may or may not have been a dangerous illness; and having become a warm admirer of the elder C. C. Jones and his splendid wife Mary—he can hardly stop here. Most readers who have reached this point will in fact take quiet delight in the knowledge that they have stretching before them a thousand and more pages and almost as many letters in which to see what happens to these people, individually and collectively, and to try to figure out why it happened.

The coming of the war and the war itself give added point to the life stories of these long-forgotten men and women who were the relatives and friends of a Liberty County preacher; and the story the letters tell of life and death in coastal Georgia in wartime and under military occupation is both poignant and fascinating. Yet, what holds the reader to the last page and then leaves him with a sense of a journey well taken and time well spent, is the company he has kept. For this, we are all indebted to the editor of this volume, Robert Manson Myers. We can only marvel at the skill and devotion with which he has transformed a scattered mass of miscellaneous papers into a coherent and powerful statement about life in nineteenth-century America.

A Strict Regard for Truth

EMILY BRONTË. *By Winifred Gérin. Oxford University Press.* $9.95.

Reviewed by MARY ELLMANN

A new book by Winifred Gérin, and a book on a Brontë—this time, Emily Brontë—arouses attention and, naturally, respect. It deserves special notice, if only in recognition of Winifred Gérin's previous work on the Brontës, especially her *Charlotte Brontë*. The book on Emily, like the book on Charlotte, has the authority of immersion, years spent in the Haworth parsonage where Mr. Brontë served as pastor, and on the moors of Yorkshire.

It was at Haworth, as the fifth of six children, that Emily Brontë spent her childhood and her brief adulthood. She was born on July 30, 1818, succeeded only by Anne Brontë, born a year and a half

✪ MARY ELLMANN wrote *Thinking About Women.*

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later; and she died on December 19, 1848. Yet she had time to write a great deal of poetry and her only novel, *Wuthering Heights.*

Emily's character still remains elusive, and yet the biography retains a strict regard for truth. Ordinarily, there is something irresistibly romantic about the Brontës—their mutual remoteness, obscurity and bad health. The concern for fact in Winifred Gérin, combined with particularity, gives the book genuine body. For the time one is reading *Emily Brontë,* one assents.

But the book suffers in contrast to *Charlotte Brontë.* The two, it is true, are less repetitive than one might expect: the biographer's allegiance to the subject, whichever Brontë it is, repeatedly alters the perspective. But at the same time, Charlotte Brontë's problems are more practical, rather more tangible than Emily's. And Charlotte herself has left abundant evidence—in letters, in manuscripts, in *Jane Eyre.*

Nothing in Emily Brontë's life is comparable to Charlotte's school experience at Cowan Bridge, the epidemic of typhus, or to her being a governess, or to her teaching at Roe Head. At Charlotte's urging, Emily tried Roe Head, but had to return home. Her homesickness had physical effects, proving, not for the last time, the interrelation of mind and body. But these omissions, these seeming inactions, are not to Emily's discredit. The fuller records of other people often reflect less absorbing lives. So James Joyce considered Emily's imagination one of three pure imaginations of the nineteenth century—the other two are Kipling and Yeats, not the other Brontës.

Given the scanty record of Emily Brontë's encounters, in turn, one imagines her life instead of seeing it. And most of what little evidence she left, Charlotte Brontë, for upright and uptight reasons, destroyed. These reasons included Emily's known preference for privacy and, in turn, the public's known prejudice against pantheism. Emily's reputation for conventional, Anglican faith was preserved by

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drastic removal of evidence to the contrary. The few letters by Emily that are left (thanks to the girls' friend, Ellen Nussey), are baffling—cordial, but without revelation. Some surviving diary letters, to be opened at distant, although precise dates—say, Anne Brontë's birthday four years later—are at least more informative. They account for our sharp sense of the Brontës' domestic surroundings.

The main problem is Winifred Gérin's tendency to simplify. It is not that one asks for a Freudian analysis of Emily Brontë, but for a subtle, pervasive sense of mind and body. Both are involved, especially for an ill person, in every moment of life. For example, even in treating Emily's good health, the book needs a more pointed statement of the close verbal relationship between sex and religion:

> I'll come when thou art saddest
> Laid alone in the darkened room . . . .
> I'll come when the heart's real feeling
> Has entire, unbiased sway,
> And my influence o'er thee stealing,
> Grief deepening, joy congealing,
> Shall bear thy soul away.

This is all translatable, without offense, into human and sexual terms. Indeed, in commenting on the poem, Gérin too becomes ambivalent: " . . . an external power, whose mastery—one is tempted to say whose *presence*—she [Emily Brontë] recognizes as being outside herself." Gérin seems on the verge of admitting a double meaning, yet she stops short of it.

Similarly, in explaining Emily's decline and death, Winifred Gérin emphasizes every detail, except Emily's having tuberculosis. That seems incidental, almost voluntary, when, in fact, it was neither. We go on pretending to observe subtleties of the mind, even as the wasted body fits into a stick of a coffin. All Emily's last months were inevitably affected by her disease, and they had to be grisly whatever her other circumstances. Illness affects character and subtly changes it. The difference has to be

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not between Emily and the world but between Emily and *Anne,* member of the same family and victim of the same disease. So, at last, in comparison with Anne, Emily's grimness becomes striking, and establishes conviction. The difference is subtle but important. Winifred Gérin's effort is admirable and she works against great odds —but she somewhat misplays the few cards left in her hand.

And the Camel's Back

THE NEEDLE'S EYE. *By Margaret Drabble. Alfred Knopf. $6.95.*

Reviewed by LAURIE QUINN

Simon Camish is an English barrister living in a fashionable terrace of London with his wife Julie and their three children. Simon is a thoughtful man, the product of a working-class background, who diligently studied his way through to reading law at Oxford. Julie is more involved with possessions than with actions. Having an independent income, she is consumed by needs no sooner gratified than forgotten.

Julie's accepted lack of interest in Simon's professional friends results in Simon's spending an inordinate amount of time "with people he really deeply disliked, talking about things that bored him rigid." So it was not particularly odd that, at a dinner hosted by his wife's friends while Julie was in the States, Simon should find in Rose Vassilou, invited to even out his mate-less presence, a welcome respite from the frenetically animated banter of the others.

Prior to her arrival, Simon had been apprised by his host that the celebrity of the party was the former Rose Bryanston whom surely he must remember. And Simon did recall that about ten years earlier there had been a highly publicized case of a

✪ LAURIE QUINN was graduated from Rosemont College and attended the Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. She has worked in publishing and is employed as a legal researcher in Philadelphia.

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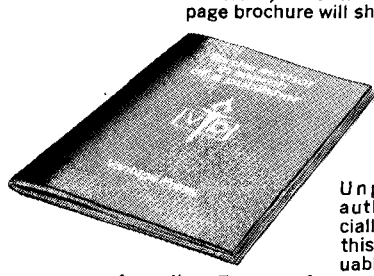

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young heiress being made a ward of court by her father as she had "set her heart on marrying an unsuitable man." And he thought he recalled that she had given all her money away to the poor. But Simon's thoughts on meeting Rose were not of the large-type headlines chronicling the funding of an African village school by a British heiress, but of Rose's unadorned style of dress and her unselfconscious, humble manner.

While driving Rose home to her remote and shabby neighborhood, Simon discovers that Rose is embroiled in yet another legal travail, this time over the custody of her three children. The passionate Greek, Christopher Vassilou, with whom she had shared headlines throughout their courtship, marriage and divorce, was willing to put them both through the publicity grinder again in an attempt to gain custody of the children.

The custody case proves to be the supporting thread weaving almost all of the characters together. In itself, Christopher's case appears to be an implausible threat to Rose, not only because fathers rarely win such suits, but also because the grounds are suppositional—that the children will not receive a proper education in the neighborhood in which they live. This case is used as a playing card. It is picked up by Christopher to needle Rose for leaving him. It is employed by Simon to lend a professional advisory tone to his much-desired talks and visits with her.

The strength of *The Needle's Eye* lies in the unheightened authenticity of the characters. Each character has sought to alter the course of his destiny in ways predictably based on the attraction of opposites. Rose, having wealth, was anxious to rid herself of money and marry a penniless and earthy immigrant. Christopher sought the solidity of wealth and the freedom of spirit and openness of heart that Rose embodied. Simon looked for an unfettered way of life and some escape from the "excessive delicacies" his mother had so engrained in him. Julie had fancied but had never come close to being an independent creative soul. Her actions, more than any other character's, are reactive, devoid of resolution.

Rose and Simon form the nucleus of *The Needle's Eye*. Yet Drabble conscientiously avoids misleading titillation as to the outcome of the relationship between them. The situation dictates that they must remain companions of the spirit.

Simon muses over the ways in which memories of the past affect the present. He nostalgically recalls the convenient distortions his mother would employ on her radio show, "a ghastly chain of reiterated delusions." Simon sees himself as one of "the refugees, the sensitive ones who had found the noises and the pushing unendurable and had fought their way out onto a clear drawing room carpet with empty yards on either side" who, now removed from the world of touch, "would eye each other across spaces, isolated, marooned, unable to approach or touch, or share a bodily warmth, having lost forever this capacity."

Rose also thinks of the past and whether it can possibly be laid aside, tucked away. She feels a quiet, understated life-style on a meager subsistence level is what she really desires. Yet she wonders whether she merely seeks that in counterpoise to the abnormally eventful periods in her life: "Perhaps it is the melodrama that is the temptation, after all." Rose's fundamental aim is "a sense of being right."

Simon finds Rose so agreeable because of her guileless nature, her tendency to befriend people. Simon thinks fondly of Rose with "her wrinkled fingers picking fretfully at the stain on her skirt." In the end, however, it is Simon who proves the least self-interested. He had wittingly established a progression of actions the final one of which guaranteed that "any gain would be his own loss."

The Needle's Eye is a carefully written novel. It reminds the reader throughout of the question of whether one's choices free or encumber one in making future choices. Most significantly, Margaret Drabble has imparted a sense of moral purpose or, at least, the sense of a need for one in the two main characters' thoughts and actions. In current literature, this is rare.

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The Reader Replies

THE READER REPLIES *carries miscellaneous comments by readers and authors on various articles that have appeared in the magazine. All communications should be addressed to: Editor,* THE AMERICAN SCHOLAR, *1811 Q Street, N. W., Washington, D. C. 20009. Because of space limitations we cannot guarantee to print all letters received.*
—EDITOR

In order to atone for my ignorance and bewilderment over what the female of the species may be griping about, I have waded through a quagmire of some twenty-one pages, entitled "Women on Women" in your Autumn issue, only to emerge exhausted and befogged.

This so-called discussion by the elite of the sex was, however, fortunately clarified by the penetrating comments of an outsider, Ms. Patricia McLaughlin, whose conclusions I heartily and gratefully endorse.

MELVILLE CANE
New York, New York

* * *

I see that in your round-and-round-table by women about women you print the tantalizing abbreviation *Ms.* It is tantalizing—more than most because it seems to have no full word behind it; and so far as I can see none is coming up out of the collective unconscious.

In classic American literature, of course, *Ms.* stands for manuscript, but women are not handwritten so much as hand-painted, and it is obvious that *Ms.* bears some visual relation to Miss and Mrs., yet without a distinctive sound to set it apart. Now you, Sir, have a tape (which, by the way, is medical shorthand for harboring a tapeworm in your G.I. tract—where G.I. does not mean "American soldier" but "gastro-intestinal": abbreviations *are* the devil!) To return: you have a tape from which you doubtless heard the problematic *Ms.* Please tell us what you heard. Was it Miz or Muss, Mess or Emss, or what?

And while you are being so kind, settle for us another dark question. You were at the symposium. Did you notice whether the married women had taken off their wedding rings? Or had the unmarried slipped some on, as for a minimifidian hotel clerk? If marital status is a private affair, it would seem logical to drop the ring as we take up Ms. The only inconvenience would be to bachelors of roving eye and some scruple, who regulate their pickup technique by the ring finger. (There is also the predicament of how to proceed with young nuns in lipstick and miniskirt, as I observed not long ago on my way to my alma mater, Notre Dame, but that is a separate social problem that comes under the head of divestism.)

Finally—if you can indulge me so long—I would impart a final bewilderment, as to the use by some of your women conversationalists of the words *lady* and *gentleman.* I know I am typing this letter in elite type, but I am sure my machine would jam if I hit the keys in those forbidden sequences. Why did you not edit them out? Let me confess further, to forestall investigations and wiretaps, that my typewriter is an L. C. Smith-Corona, and Corona carries an unpleasant suggestion of royalty, but I declare here and now my conviction that L. C. Smith is a male chauvinist substitution for Elsie Smith. Whether she was Ms. or married to somebody with the initials L. C. is anybody's gs.

ROGER DU BEARN
New York, New York

* * *

I have a degree of admiration for Jerzy Kosinski's creative work, but I would prefer to have him rest his political and social analysis on fact rather than fiction. I would suggest

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that he reflect seriously on the advice offered by the president of Magdalen College to an inquiring student, as set forth by Gilbert Highet in the Autumn issue, the same one in which Kosinski's article appeared: "always to verify your references."

This thought came to me upon reading Kosinski's comment that "those traditional opponents, unions and big business, no longer seem politically so far apart." Had he read and compared the legislative programs upon which lobbying efforts are based of the National Association of Manufacturers and the A.F.L.-C.I.O., each of which is available free of charge upon request, he could not possibly have arrived at the same conclusion. Whatever else big business and unions may have in common, they are worlds apart "politically."

Two things follow: first, before "references" can be verified, they must be employed, and secondly, everything is not what it "seems" to be.

JULES KOLODNY
New York, New York

* * *

Mr. Hough's article, "The Kennedy Bill," in the Autumn issue, points up the difference between the good guys, who on Martha's Vineyard wish to preserve the status now prevailing, and the bad guys, who want to lay out subdivisions, changing the whole atmosphere of the place, filling the lovely empty places.

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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.
Dorothy B. Kerr

Okay, but then, is it the *bad* guys in Newton, Massachusetts and Forest Hills and Milton and all the rest, who want to preserve their environment, and the *good* guys who want to build highrise apartments and public housing, creating Zombieville, like Columbia Point?

MRS. L. C. WILLIAMS
Westwood, Massachusetts

* * *

In proffering a rebuttal to Mr. Rovit's provocative article on Emerson, in the Summer issue of the SCHOLAR, I should like to address myself to Mr. Rovit's assessment of Emerson as "poet of the gap." Though he correctly acknowledged Emerson's preoccupation with the gap between the inner reality of the self (the I) and the outer appearance of nature (the not-I), Mr. Rovit failed to identify correctly just whose gap Emerson was delineating.

The first basic precept of oratory to which any rhetorician subscribes is the maintenance of a distinction between the politics of the speaker and his speech. Mr. Rovit hastily assumed that Emerson was offering for consideration his own gap. Such an assumption must not go unchallenged. First, transcendentalism is the denial of the existence of gaps; with a concept of nature which calls for the permeation of matter with spirit, the disparity of the outer world and the inner self exits. And second, the quintessential duty of a transcendentalist, who, of course, must acknowledge nature's spirituality and therefore the basic unity of reality and appearance, is in the publicizing of his insights. Emerson's rhetorical essays, the direct result of this Socratic responsibility, first defined what Emerson deemed to be his audience's primary gaps and then proceeded to the fundamental business of the closing of these gaps. These delineations of gaps are purely instructional; they exist solely for the benefit of his audience's schooling. Hence, the gaps that prevade much of Emerson's writings are not his own but those of his audience. Emerson's cherishing of the gap is entirely functional; it simply facilitates his writing.

It would do well for Mr. Rovit to consider the gap motif in Emerson as strictly rhetorical and as such merely another manifestation of Emerson's grab bag of rhetorical devices. Thus, it appears that Mr. Rovit was taken in by his own approach, for the role player (in this case, the celebrant of the gap) may also be but a role.

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